

ILLUSTRATED TALES TO BEWITCH & BEDEVIL YOU

VAMPI
#23
APRIL 1973

VAMPIRELLA

A WARREN MAGAZINE POC 75¢ 588856

DEEP
IN THE
HEART
OF THE
JUNGLE
AWAITS
THE
DEADLY
COBRA
QUEEN!

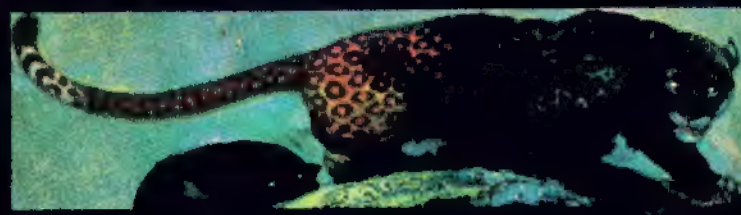


Scotchy

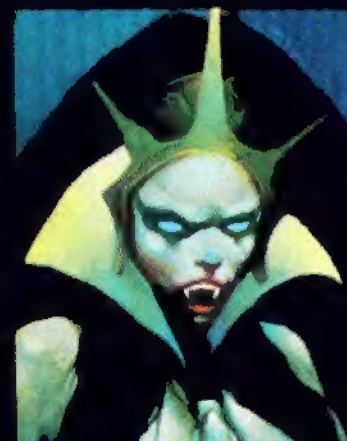


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TO TRIPLE YOUR HEARTBEAT
WITH HER OWN
BEWITCHING TALES!

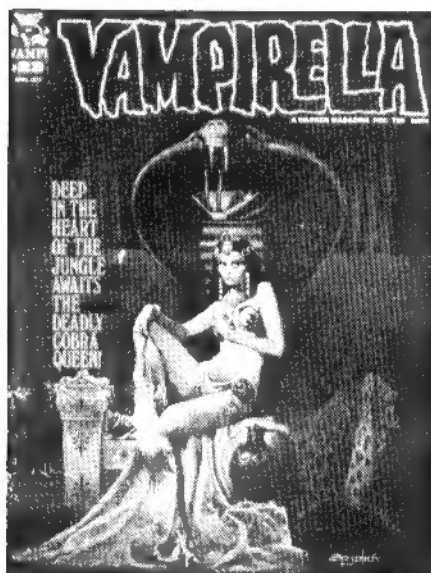


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OUR COVER
The tale of the Cobra Queen, most beautiful and deadly of all jungle legends unfolds on page 24. Cover art is by Sanjulian.

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VAMPIRELLA

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APRIL 1973

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"It's about time you fellows realized the sexual connotations of vampirism, and I applaud you for it," writes one of our female fang-fans. Also, other letters about Vampirella and company.

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In a small swamp-town, Vampirella and friends find themselves caught in a trap from which there is no escape... and Vampi is forced to play the helpless pawn in a game of Death!

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A bizarre set of roommates makes for a terrifying tale—a kitten and her mistress prove how catty some women become; the pet takes over the master's mind for revenge on animal-haters!

38 THE ACCURSED Why would anyone want to visit a cemetery in the middle of the night? Especially a cemetery with a werewolf, vampire bats and a pack of hungry rats guarding the body of their master—the sorcerer!

46 WITCH'S PROMISE In a hidden hillside grotto, a soldier finds that love and death are not that far apart, when he meets and mates a lonely lovesick witch who was born almost two centuries before, and refuses to die!

65 WON'T EDDIE EVER LEARN?
Poor Eddie, you'd think by this time he would have learned. After running from the police on one charge, why did he have to go robbing again? Poor Eddie, he'll end up in the pen, again!



"Only thing wrong with VAMPIRELLA: Science Fiction!"

About VAMPIRELLA #21: Marvelous, simply marvelous. Enrich's cover painting was beautiful, though not as beautiful as his cover for Vampi #18. "Mind Benders" was great!

How come when Vampires change form their clothing changes also? It makes everything quite unreal.

By the way, how do you pronounce your name? I have two friends and we all say it differently.

ROE KAMP
St. Petersburg, Fla.

My name is pronounced "VAMPA-RELLA."

How do you guys do it? Issue #21 was another success. That cover! There are NO words great enough to express my feelings about that cover. Every cover by Enrich has been super-terrific. My sister thought the covers of #18 and #21 were photographs.

"Slitherers Of The Sand" was by far the best story. All the other stories were about the same degree of greatness. The "Short-Shocker" was pretty neat, too.

DONNY SCONTRAS
Orono, Maine

I'd like to point out that your true Women's Lib stories are not those which play so effectively on men's fears, but those dealing with Vampi! The tables are turned and it is Adam who is continually rescued by her, goes mad in the heat, tries to be heroic, and blows it, and is generally a useless piece of baggage like women used to be in adventure fiction! I am waiting for Vampi to get into a fight indoors so Adam can pick up a vase and break it over the wrong person's head. It is as much a drag when a man has to play that role. Adam was just fine when Archie Goodwin was handling him, but although Steve Englehart is a great improvement over T. Casey Brennan, it doesn't look like he's going to do any better by Adam.

For the rest, I'm with Linda Maxwell in congratulating you on admitting the sexuality of Vampirism. This aspect of it has long been acknowledged by movies, and except for the rare case of Lugosi bending over Dwight Frye, I can't remember a male vampire moving in to bite a man except to kill. It is noteworthy that in *Dracula AD 1972* (which is a lot better than it sounds), although Lee is willing to try to bite Cushing to kill him, when he has to bite the boy who is his assistant in order to give him the powers of vampirism, Lee is noticeably reluctant, and the camera blacks out on the scene.

MS. LLOYD ROSE
Chapel Hill, N.C.

I have been reading your magazine ever since issue #1. I enjoy the VAMPIRELLA stories and their concept of the fact that everyone can be on the side of good if they want to be. I like the way you hold up under pressure, Vampi; you seem to want to be good but you have to fight your nature to do this. Vampi, cheer up. You are not alone in your fight—the people of the Earth are the same way. You are mystified by a world you don't understand but I think you have just missed seeing the sameness of the two worlds. Many people have their affliction to conquer. The fight for survival is a long hard one and the differences of the causes are better understood than you think. You have shown us one side of Earth vampires, but there is another side, too—those that are Vampires not because of themselves, but those who fell victim and thus become what they would not want to be, and they, too, have to conquer their curse.

DEBRA HATFIELD
Ft. Smith, Ark.

I think VAMPIRELLA #21 was good. "The Vampiress Stalks" was really good. "Paranoia" was fair. "Slitherers Of The Sand" was the best. A word of warning, Vampi. Some of your latest issues are not as good as they used to be. You better improve your features or EERIE and CREEPY will run you out of the business. Hang in there, Vampi.

JOHN PATROS
Wappingers Falls, N.Y.

VAMPIRELLA #21 was just fantastic. The cover was beautiful, even with signs of Death, yet, you still looked gorgeous, Vampi.

BOB HASTY
Portsmouth, Va.

I just finished reading issue #21 which happens to be the first one I bought. I'm happy to say that all your stories were beautifully done. The artwork was absolutely fabulous. I especially liked "The Vampiress Stalks The Castle This Night," and also "Tomb Of The Gods." I hope you keep up the good work, 'cause I plan to keep buying more of your issues.

IRIS CRUZ
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Hey, men—where are your letters? Most of the letters seem to be from the girls. What's happening? Let's put the Male back in the mail column.

To put it simply, VAMPIRELLA #21 was stupendous! Even the page numbers shone with a certain radiance. Gonzalez couldn't have captured your bustidious beauty more perfectly.

"Vampiress Stalks the Castle" was a suspenseful mystery as well as a true work of art.

KELLY KEARSE
Charleston, S.C.

I must say that "Slitherers In The Sand" was the best story in VAMPIRELLA #21. Gonzalez's artwork was good as usual, and I hope Gonzalez will stay with VAMPIRELLA as the number one artist for years to come.

Also, "The Vampiress Stalks The Castle This Night" had good artwork, but the story didn't make much sense.

I am disappointed that you did not have Auraleon illustrate a story in this issue, and I am suggesting that you have him do more artwork in the future.

SANDRA DOWDRIE
Winston, Salem, N.C.

I have been reading the VAMPIRELLA episodes ever since issue number one, but haven't written until now. As far as the series goes, I MISS ARCHIE! Chad Archer is pretty good, but **nobody** can equal Archie Goodwin's eloquent writing style.

Don't think me a tactless boor, but I don't like the "Tomb of the Gods" series. Maroto is a great artist, but as a writer, he has a ways to go.

"Paranoia" was truly great, with both Steve Skeates and Luis Garcia coming on with their usual polish. I enjoyed "Puppy Love," your Short-Shocker. Felix Mas' art in "The Vampiress Stalks" was fantasmagorical.

JOHN VOLAND
Van Nuys, Calif.

All I've got to say about VAMPIRELLA is: the only thing wrong with your magazine is SCIENCE FICTION! The only thing right: Garcia, Bea, Dube, Dominguez, Maroto and Sutton!

KATHLEEN LaCLAIRE
Miami, Fla.

Just wanted to congratulate you on #21. My favorite story was "Slitherers Of The Sand." I especially liked the artwork on Page 6. Never lose Gonzalez.

ERIH MIAZGA
Toronto, Canada



Cover artist Enrich's photographic rendition of VAMPIRELLA in a scene from "The Slitherers of the Sand," drew much reader comment. Most was complimentary of the art!

"Only thing right: Maroto, Bea!"

Touche, dear girl, touche. With each issue, **VAMPIRELLA** becomes increasingly better. Obviously the head hauncho at Warren Publishing has finally realized that their countless readers deserve something better than the pitiful material they were getting. And, by golly, they've done something about it. Somebody has really put the Warren Magazines on their feet. They've gotten off the ground, and that is exactly what the magazines have needed for a long time. And who is leading this march for excellence? None other than the sexiest thing that has hit the comic world since Wonder Woman—it can be none other than the Draculonian sensation, **VAMPIRELLA**.

Vampi, you are indeed magnificent.

A typical example of your splendor is quite evident in issue #21. This issue happens to be the first of my new 14 issue subscription.

One thing that has always set the Warren Magazines apart from other horror magazines is their exceptionally fine cover art. No. 21 is, of course, no exception. The cover was great. But, as we all know, nothing else can be expected from Enrich. He has repeatedly proved this with issues #17 & 18.

Everything has shown improvement in the magazine, including the letter's column. Besides visibly looking visually exciting I'm glad to see you no longer print soley complimentary letters. Criticizing letters and even some making outright derogatory statements are now seen. I am also pleased to see letters that offer polite constructive criticism with real insight and thought.

As for the stories, most were of a very high standard.

"Slitherers Of The Sand" was good, but somehow seemed to lack imagination. The involvement of plot that your old story writer, Archie Goodwin, put in has not been rivalled yet. In my opinion, Archie Goodwin is to Vampirella as Robert Howard is to Conan. Archie gave you life with all its joys and sorrows. Indeed, under his pen, you were real, a flesh and blood person. Then you were submitted to the imaginations of T. Casey Brennan, who, at the time, seemed to be a sufficient replacement. In fact, with the first issues when he took over the reigns, Mr. Brennan made a terrific showing of himself as he did in his past tales. But slowly, gradually, his plots become boring, mediocre and you dropped into the "make-be-

lieve" ranks of a typical comic character.

Now you've turned over to Steve Englehart. Perhaps he can place you back up on the pedestal you so richly deserve.

But even with your withering plots, the dramatic art of Jose Gonzalez pulls each issue through. Though Goodwin gave you literary life, Gonzalez has given you artistic life. Gonzalez rescued you from the rut made by Tom Sutton. But with the talents of Gonzalez behind you, Vampi, you can go nowhere but up.

I think that has been proven with the fabulous poster he did of you. I have one and it was worth every cent I paid for it. I also have a six-foot Frankenstein poster by Jack Davis. Both hang side by side on my closet doors. I affectionately call them "Beauty and the Beast."

About your other stories. The few people who criticize Esteban Maroto's solo work are the ones who can't see the allegories that each tale holds. I believe every story Maroto has written that has appeared in the Warren Magazines is symbolic of a point or ideal Maroto is attempting to get across to the readers.

"Paranoia" by Steve Skeates is typical of the Skeates syndrome. Acceptable, but not at all outstanding. "The Vampire Stalks the Castle At Night." When I first saw it, I thought it was going to be a standard Vampire story. However I was wrong. Mr. McGregor can write a good Vampire tale and make it truly different. All in all, Vampi, your stories are on the up and up. And I'm sure you'll keep them that way.

M. GREGORY BRYANT
Seminole, Fla.

I received my six foot poster of you today, and it is really beautiful. You look so great you even made my girlfriend jealous. Not even Playboy has posters this good, **VAMPIRELLA**.

Issue #21 was a distinct improvement over issues in which Brennan was the **VAMPIRELLA** strip scriptor, and what a fantastic 23 page adventure you had. Steve Englehart is portraying your emotions better than any other author, and nobody could illustrate you better than Gonzalez. I advise all readers to complete their **VAMPIRELLA** collections as quickly as possible, because they are all collector's editions bound to increase in price.

WESLEY SCOTT
Belle Plaine, Kansas



There were muscular heroes and voluptuous women galore in Esteban Maroto's controversial "Tomb of the Gods" series. Many readers claimed they loved the art, but the writing wasn't up to par. The series has been dropped in favor of more Maroto artwork on traditional horror stories!

This is the first one of your magazines I've read, and it won't be the last. Issue #21 was great! I've seen your poster, and the drawing in "Slitherers of the Sand," and it proves to me that Jose Gonzalez is a master.

The story itself bugs me however. I mean, a giant slug? And a talking one at that. Dracula really comes on strong in the end, the way he should have been all through the story: fighting to drink the blood of Pendragon and the Van Helsing! We want **MORE** Dracula!

JOEL BAILEY
Brooklyn, N.Y.

More Dracula coming up, Joel! With the current issue of **EERIE**, on sale now, **DRACULA** begins a series all his own! And **VAMPIRELLA** herself makes a quickie appearance.

I would like to see more werewolves and vampires in your magazine. Why haven't you ever created a story about King Kong or Godzilla?

DAVID INGLE
Morris, Minn.

I must say that **VAMPIRELLA** is the best magazine on the market today. And the artistry is the best I've ever seen anywhere! Jose Gonzalez can draw anything. But I would like to see him draw a werewolf story, starring **VAMPIRELLA**!

BOBBY HANON
Upland, Calif.

Jose Gonzalez already has drawn a werewolf **VAMPIRELLA** strip, Bobby! Way back in issue #14, **VAMPIRELLA** battled a she-wolf on "The Isle of the Huntress!"

VAMPI'S BITING HER NAILS!

Think you've got problems, bunky? **VAMPIRELLA** is biting her nails because she thinks nobody loves her! She only received 722 letters this morning. Why not write a letter to everybody's favorite neck-biter today!

SCARLET LETTERS
c/o Warren Publishing Co.
145 E. 32nd Street
New York, N.Y. 10016



WINTERTIME IN MAINE! TO MANY WHO TREAD THE CONCRETE / TO CLAY OF EAST COAST **METROPOLISES**, IT IS A THREE-DAY INUNDATION IN **FANTASY**, A BADLY-NEEDED **BREATH** FROM THE DREARY REALITY OF GRAY 9-TO-5 DAYS. TO **OTHERS**-- THE SKI BUMS, THE STUDENTS, THE RICH--IT IS ONLY A **WELL STOP** ON A FIVE-- MONTH TOUR OF **SNOW**. AND TO **RESIDENTS**, IT IS A REQUISITE **HARDSHIP** NAILED INTO THE UNWRITTEN CONTRACT OF BEING AN **EASTER**.

BUT TO **ONE**, IT IS **UNIQUE**-- BECAUSE ON HER ALIEN **BIRTH-PLANET**, THERE IS **NO WATER** TO FREEZE INTO HEXAGONAL CRYSTALS--AND **HER NAME** IS...

VAMPIRELLA





YOU SHOULD **JOIN ME**, ADAM-- THE **SNOW** CAN REMOVE THOSE SOUR **LINES** FROM YOUR FACE.

I'D **LOVE TO**, VAMPIRELLA, BELIEVE ME-- BUT THERE'S NO **TIME** FOR PLAY ANY LONGER-- NOT FOR **US**.

MY FATHER AND I HAVE JUST **DECIPHERED** SOME NOTES AND **DIARIES** WE FOUND IN FATHER JONA'S CHURCH--*

--AND IF WE **UNDERSTAND** THEM CORRECTLY, THE **DARKLING DISCIPLES**, THE **CULT** HE BELONGED TO, HAS A **SECOND BASE**--

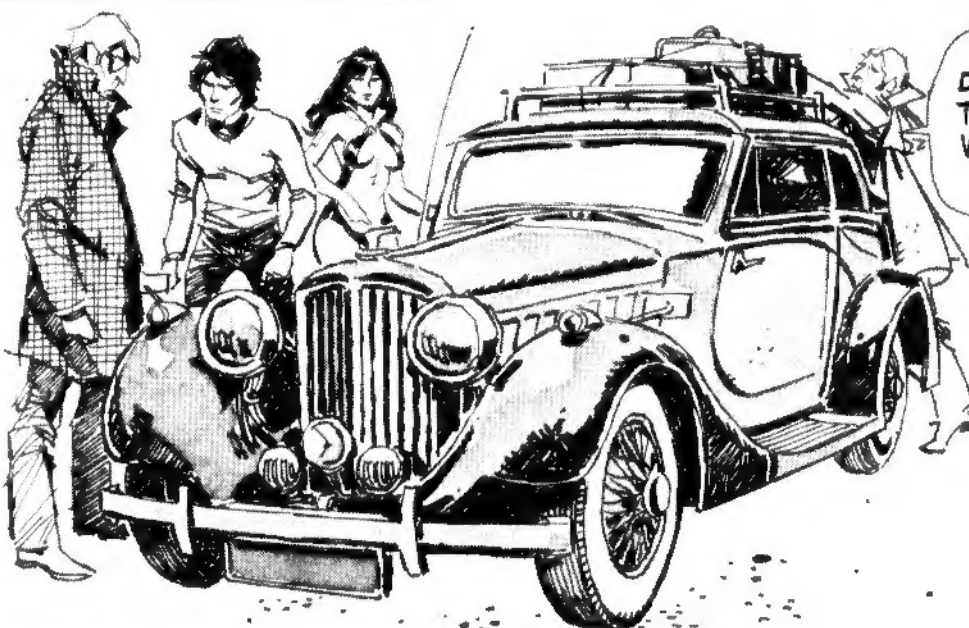
-- SOMEWHERE NEAR **NEW ORLEANS**. WE WANT TO GO THERE **IMMEDIATELY**.

* SEE **VAMPIRELLA** #22 "HELL FROM ON HIGH!"



I SWORE **VENGEANCE** ON THEM WHEN THEY KILLED MY BROTHER, AND EVEN IF WE WERE **NOT** THE ONLY ONES WHO POSSESSED THE KNOWLEDGE AND WEAPONS--

-- I WOULD NEVER **STOP** UNTIL I HAD CONFRONTED EVERY **VESTAGE** OF THEIR **EVIL**!



CERTAINLY, DOCTOR-- BUT MUST THE KNOWLEDGE AND WEAPONS BE SO **BULKY**?



LET ME GIVE YOU A **HAND**, PENDRAGON.

THANK YOU, ADAM. THESE POOR ARMS ARE **BEST** SERVED BENDING IN **CONVIVIAL** PURSUITS--

-- WHICH CHANCES TO **REMIND** ME... I TRUST WE PACKED A LIBERAL AMOUNT OF AFTER-WORK **REFRESHMENT**?

AHHH, **DELICIOUS**: A TASTE THAT WOULD WARM THE COCKLES OF **ANY** HEART.

... QUITE **DELECTABLE** ON A DETESTABLY COLD NIGHT LIKE **THIS**!



BAYOU PARISH ISN'T LISTED ON YOUR GASOLINE STATION ROAD MAP. IT HAS NO POST OFFICE... NO TOWN CENTER... NO GASOLINE STATION. IT'S MERELY A PATCH OF SCRUBBY LAND AND SUCKING SWAMP, SOMEWHERE TO THE SOUTHWEST OF NEW ORLEANS, BY CAJUNS... AND OTHERS WHO DON'T LIKE CIVILIZATION. IT DOES ITS BEST TO HIDE FROM THE WORLD. WOULD THAT IT COULD HAVE SUCCEEDED....



FOR BAYOU PARISH'S YOUNG PEOPLE **FIGHT** THE OLD WAYS, OF COURSE--AND **THIS** NIGHT, IT IS TO THEIR **COST!**

GEE, GARY, WHY'D WE HAVE TO LEAVE THE PARTY SO EARLY? IT WAS GETTIN' REAL GOOD.



AH, SHOVE IT, SALLY SUE! I'M SICK O' YOUR WHININ'--AND I'M SICK O' YOU!

WE'RE CALLIN' IT QUILTS.

GARY-- DON'T SAY THAT! I--I LOVE YOU! I NEED YOU!

SURE, 'CAUSE I'M THE BEST YOU'LL EVER GET, YOU PIG. BUT I'VE GOTTEN YOU NOW, SO IT'S TIME TO CHECK OUT SOMEBODY NEW, DIG?



DON'T FEEL TOO BAD, BABY-- IF CARLA'S STILL GOIN' WITH JIM, I MIGHT DROP BY SOME NIGHT.

GARY... I'LL DIE WITHOUT YOU! YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME!



AND QUIT CRYIN' ON MY SHIRT! MAW PAID TWENTY BUCKS FOR IT!



YOU CAN'T...



I WON'T
LIVE
WITHOUT---



COME TO *ME* NOW,
WOMAN-OF-THE-WATER
... AND BE *ONE*
WITH ME.

THE *DARKLING*
DISCIPLES DEMANDS
YOU TO BE...



THE BLOOD QUEEN OF BAYOU PARISH!

STORY: STEVE ENGLEHART/ART: JOSE GONZALEZ

AFTER **DEATH** MUST COME THE **FUNERAL**, TO EASE THE PAIN OF THOSE LEFT **BEHIND**. BUT **HOW** CAN THE PAIN OF PARENTS BE SALVED, WHEN THEY KNOW THAT THEIR ONLY **DAUGHTER**... WAS A **SUICIDE**?

ASHES TO ASHES...
DUST TO DUST...



THE **MORTAL** REMAINS ARE BURIED HERE... BUT THE **SPirit** SHALL SURELY MEET WITH THAT GREAT GOD WHO LIVES FOREVER....



THE GOD WE ALL...
SERVE...

THANK YOU, FATHER JONAS. IT WAS A NICE CHRISTIAN SERVICE.



AND WHILE WE CONSIDER THE **TRUTH** OF THOSE WORDS, LET US RETURN TO HER WITH WHOM WE **BEGAN**: **VAMPIRELLA**.

WAS IT, MR. CARTIER? OR DO YOU JUST **THINK** IT WAS?

THERE ARE...
MANY GODS...



CONRAD! COME IN... COME IN! I'VE BEEN AWAITING YOU **EAGERLY**, EVER SINCE YOUR **TELEGRAM** CAME.

THE **FLESH** IS WEAK, VICTOR... BUT THE **MIND** IS STILL ACTIVE.

HOW ARE YOU, OLD FRIEND?



AS OPPOSED TO **WHAT**, VICTOR? MY EXISTENCE HAS BEEN A **DANGEROUS** ONE FOR MANY YEARS, AS YOU WELL KNOW.

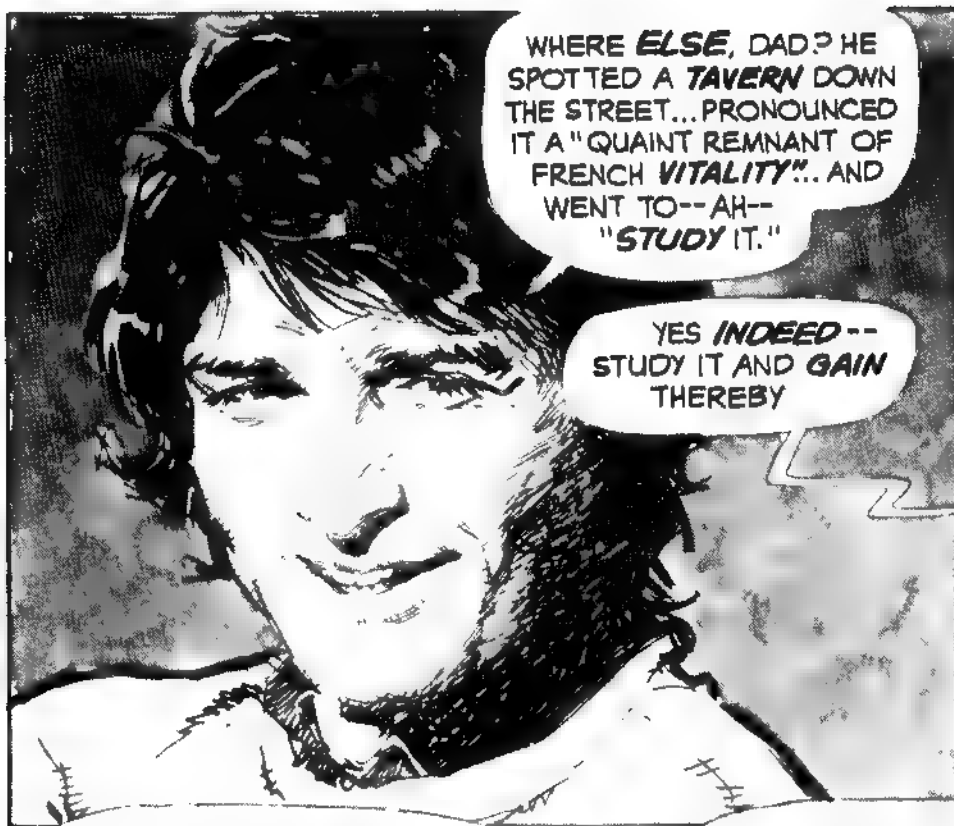
AT ANY RATE, I HAVE **ALLIES**. YOU KNOW MY SON, **ADAM**-- AND THIS IS **VAMPIRELLA**, A MOST **UNUSUAL** YOUNG GIRL.

BUT... WHERE IS **PENDRAGON**, **ADAM**?

AND AT **OUR** AGE, THAT IS ALL THAT CAN BE **EXPECTED**. STILL, IF YOUR ACTIVITIES ARE THE SAME AS **EVER**...

... COULDN'T THAT LEAD TO **DANGER**?





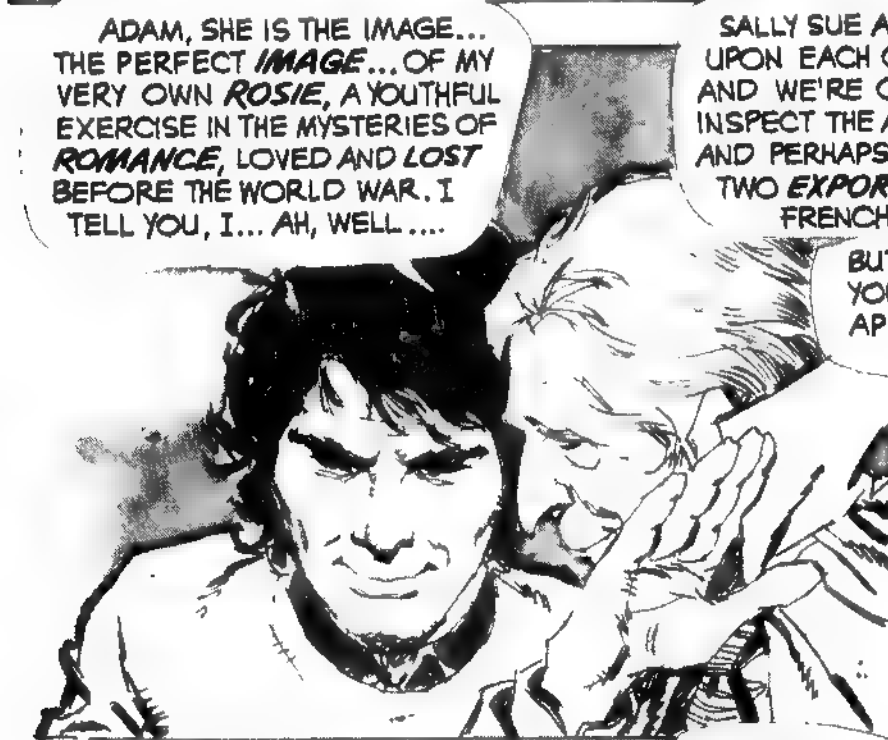
WHERE *ELSE*, DAD? HE SPOTTED A *TAVERN* DOWN THE STREET... PRONOUNCED IT A "QUAINT REMNANT OF FRENCH *VITALITY*"... AND WENT TO-- AH-- "*STUDY IT.*"

YES *INDEED*-- STUDY IT AND *GAIN* THEREBY



I SHOULD LIKE YOU ALL TO MEET A *LOVELY* YOUNG EXPONENT OF THIS CHARMING CITY'S *GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY*, SALLY SUE CARTIER.

HI.



ADAM, SHE IS THE IMAGE... THE PERFECT *IMAGE*... OF MY VERY OWN *ROSIE*, A YOUTHFUL EXERCISE IN THE MYSTERIES OF *ROMANCE*, LOVED AND LOST BEFORE THE WORLD WAR. I TELL YOU, I... AH, WELL....

SALLY SUE AND I CHANCED UPON EACH OTHER JUST NOW-- AND WE'RE OFF TO THE CITY, TO INSPECT THE ANCIENT *BUILDINGS*, AND PERHAPS TO SAMPLE ONE OR TWO *EXPORTS* OF SUNNY FRENCH *VINEYARDS*.

BUT WE WANTED TO *INFORM* YOU, TO FORESTALL ANY APPREHENSION FROM MY *ABSENCE*.



DON'T BE TOO LONG, PENDRAGON, WE HAVE *WORK* TO DO.

LET HIM GO, VAMPIRELLA. OUR PATH MAY BE *PERILOUS*. --ANY *OASIS* ALONG IT SHOULD BE *NURTURED*.



I *KNEW* THAT OLD FRAUD WAS *LOVABLE*. --NOW I KNOW HE HAS GOOD *TASTE*.

I DIDN'T THINK THERE WAS *ANY* EARTH GIRL THAT LOOKED LIKE *YOU*, VAMPIRELLA.

ME? WELL, IF YOU *THINK* SO, ADAM. OF COURSE, WITH HER BROWN HAIR ---

BROWN? BUT--HER HAIR WAS *BLONDE*!

NO, IT WAS *BLACK*.

UNLESS WE WERE AFFECTED BY A *SPELL*--

--WHICH MEANS WE ARE INVOLVED WITH THE DARKLING DISCIPLES *ALREADY*--

--AND *PENDRAGON* IS THEIR HELPLESS *PAWN*!

UNLESS WHAT?

SOMETHING IS *WRONG* HERE. WE CAN'T BE *THAT* CONFUSED--UNLESS...

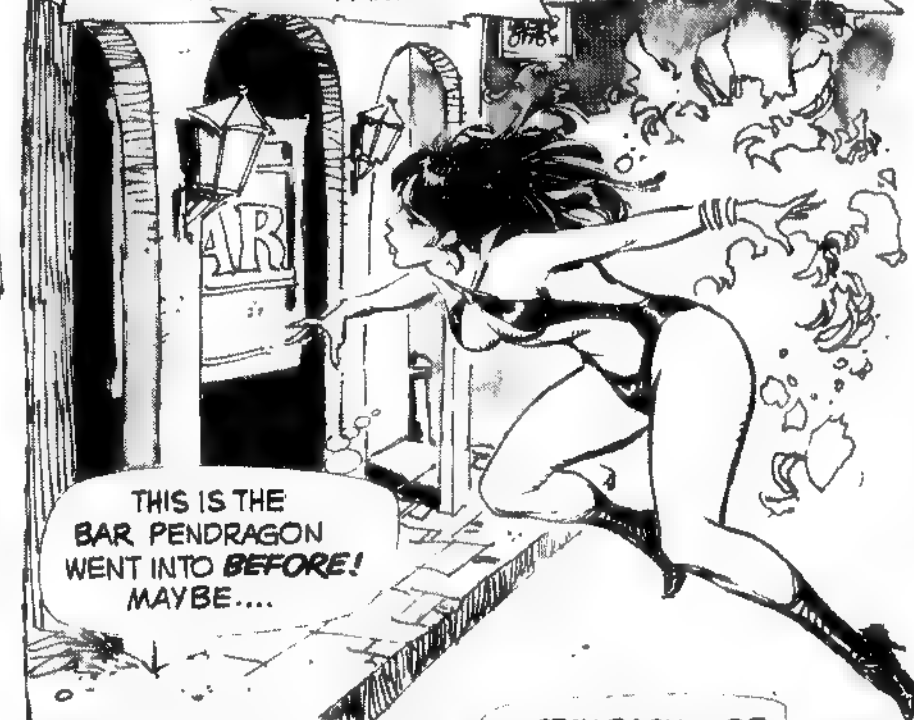
A STREAK OF **SCARLET** FLASHES FROM THE WINDOW LEDGE... BUT THEN THE POWERS OF ONE BORN ON THE PLANET **DRAKULON** MANIFEST THEMSELVES, AND THE **GIRL** TAKES THE FORM OF A NIGHT-FLYING **BAT**.



CRISS-CROSSING THE CONFUSING BYWAYS OF NEW ORLEANS' FAMED **FRENCH QUARTER**-- THEN INTO THE **HEART** OF THE MODERN METROPOLIS-- **SWIFTLY** FLIES THE TINY CREATURE...



...BUT ITS BRIGHT, BEADY **EYES** SIGHT NO **SIGN** OF AN AGING MAGICIAN, AND SO:



THIS IS THE BAR PENDRAGON WENT INTO **BEFORE!** MAYBE....

MY FRIEND **PENDRAGON**--
--A MAN IN A FROCK-COAT
WAS HERE WITH A **GIRL** AN
HOUR AGO. CAN ANYONE
TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT
HER?

NO, HONEY--
BUT IF YOU'RE
LOOKIN' FOR A **MAN**,
SLAPPER JOE'S THE
ONE FOR **YOU**.

MUST BE **COLD** IN
THAT GET-UP, DARLIN'.
GONNA HAVE TA **WARM**
YA UP-- RIGHT, GUYS?

STAY BACK--OR
I WON'T BE RESPONSIBLE
FOR WHAT MIGHT
HAPPEN.







QUICKLY--
WHAT COLOR
HAIR DOES
SHE HAVE?

WHY, RED--
LIKE MY FAIR ROSIE,
OF COURSE.



PENDRAGON, ADAM SAW
HER AS HAVING **BLACK** HAIR,
VICTOR SAW HER AS A **BLONDE**
--AND TO ME, SHE'S A
BRUNETTE.

NATURALLY,
VAMPIRELLA-- I
APPEAR AS
EVERY MAN'S
DREAM
WOMAN--



--AND I HAVE **OTHER**
POWERS!

**VEX AGUA
SUPRO!**



I AM THE WOMAN
OF THE **WATER**-- AND
I AM **SUPREME!**



UNCONSCIOUSNESS FROM LACK OF AIR IS A **HORRIBLE** THING, FOR IT IN THOSE LAST TWILIGHT MOMENTS BEFORE **AWARENESS** RETURNS, THERE ARE **DREAMS**-- DREAMS THAT YOU'LL NEVER **WAKE**.. THAT THE LINE BETWEEN BLACKING OUT AND **DEATH** IS SO **THIN**, ANY SMALL ERROR COULD HAVE LAID YOU OUT **FOREVER**.

BUT EVENTUALLY, **AWARENESS DOES** RETURN, BRINGING **RELIEF**-- UNLESS YOU ARE **VAMPIRELLA**, AND MUST SEE WHAT **SHE SEES**--



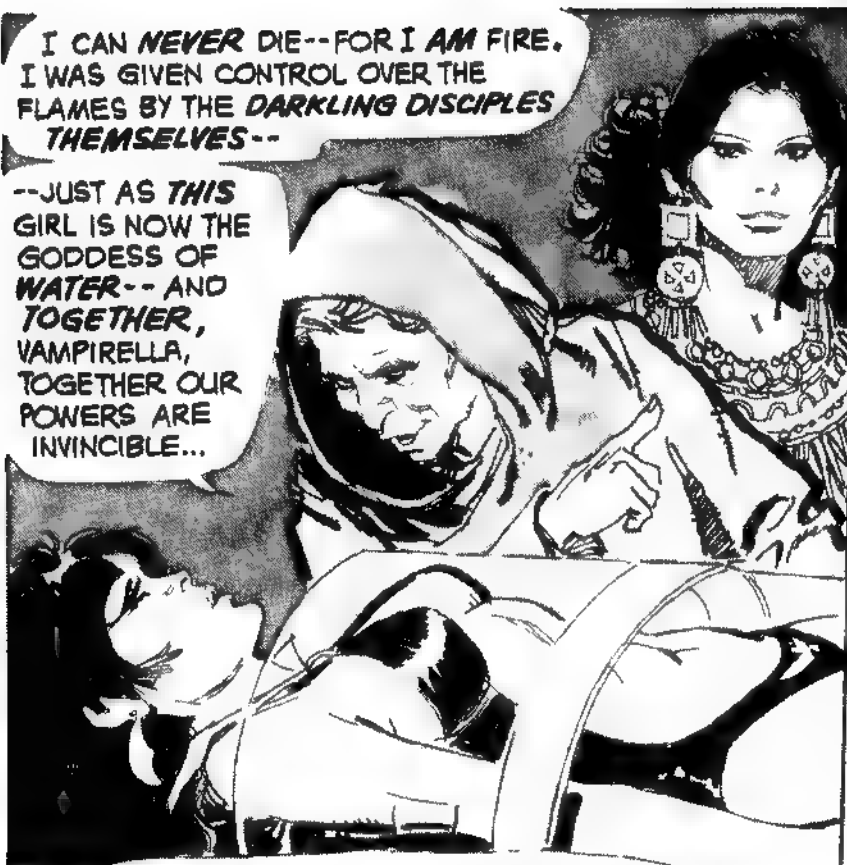
FATHER JONAS!
WE... THOUGHT YOU
WERE...

DEAD, VAMPIRELLA?
HARDLY! FIRE MAY HURT
ME, BUT IT CANNOT KILL ME,
ANY MORE THAN **WATER**
CAN KILL A **FISH!**

FIRE IS
MY **ELEMENT**,
GIRL!

I CAN NEVER DIE--FOR I AM FIRE. I WAS GIVEN CONTROL OVER THE FLAMES BY THE DARKLING DISCIPLES THEMSELVES--

--JUST AS THIS GIRL IS NOW THE GODDESS OF WATER-- AND TOGETHER, VAMPIRELLA, TOGETHER OUR POWERS ARE INVINCIBLE...



SHE IS CORRECT, VAMPIRELLA: THE DARKLING DISCIPLES HAVE MADE US INCARNATIONS OF THE BASIC ELEMENTS, AND PROVIDED US WITH OUR WANTS. THEY AID US, AS WE AID THEM!

NOW ONLY EARTH AND AIR REMAIN TO BE REBORN. THEN, WE SHALL FULFILL THE ANCIENT ALCHEMISTS' DREAMS, TO BECOME SOVEREIGNS OF THE WORLD!



YOU'RE MAD!

AWAY, YOU MINDLESS CLOD! ONCE YOU FORSOOK ME-- BUT YOU HAVE PAID FOR THAT-- HAVEN'T YOU, GARY?

WE OF THE DISCIPLES MUST HAVE OUR PLEASURES! YOUR TRANSFORMATION INTO MY PERSONAL SLAVE IS MY ONLY ONE. --AND ALL I DESIRE!



YOU SEEK TO ANNOY ME... BUT NO! I KNOW I AM MAD. THROUGH MADNESS, I SEE THINGS OTHERS DON'T EVEN BELIEVE!

AND IF OUR SCHEME IS MAD, STILL IT WILL SUCCEED-- AND ONLY THAT IS OF IMPORT!



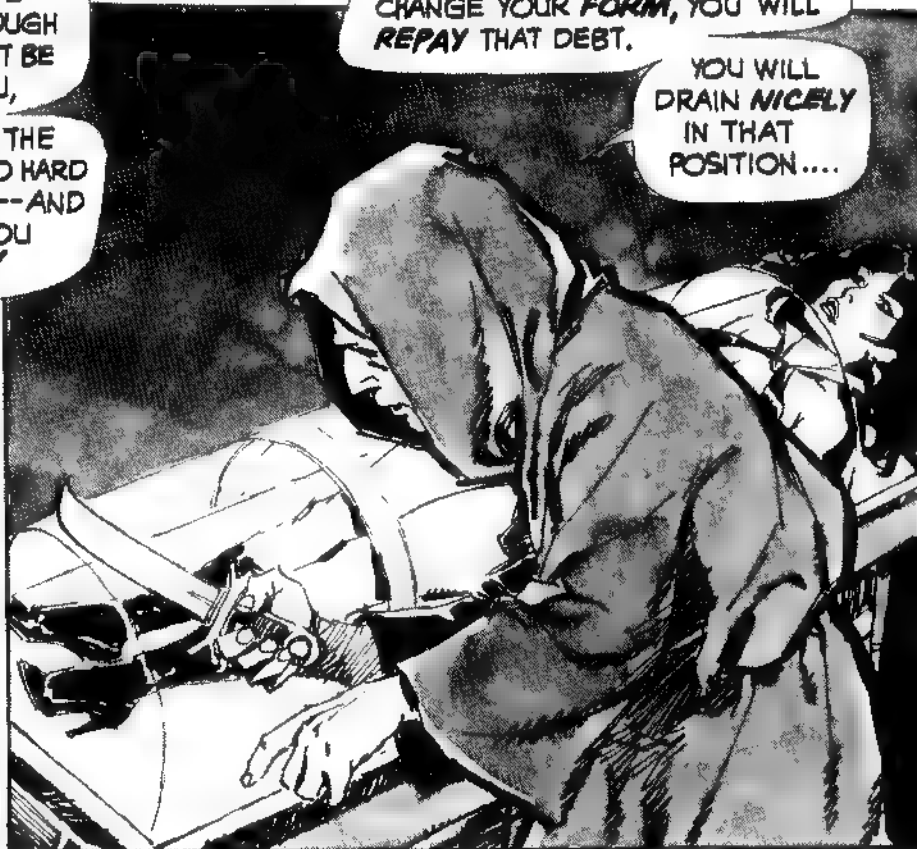
AS YOU ARE WELL AWARE, WE NEED BLOOD; THOUGH THE REASON MUST BE HIDDEN FROM YOU,

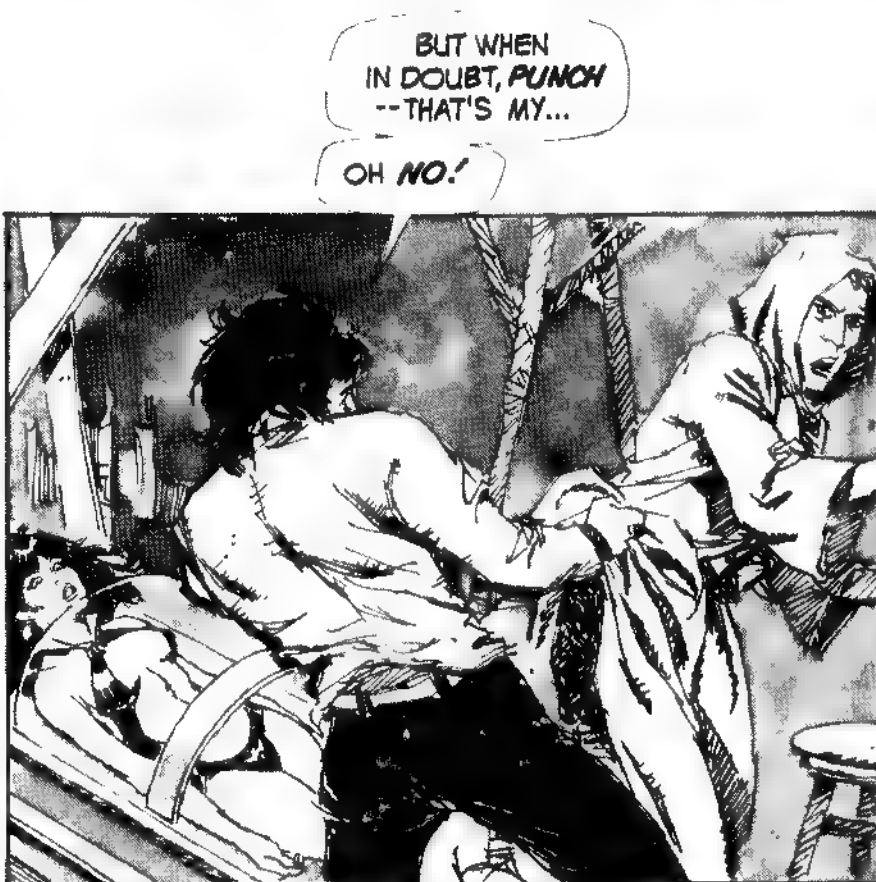
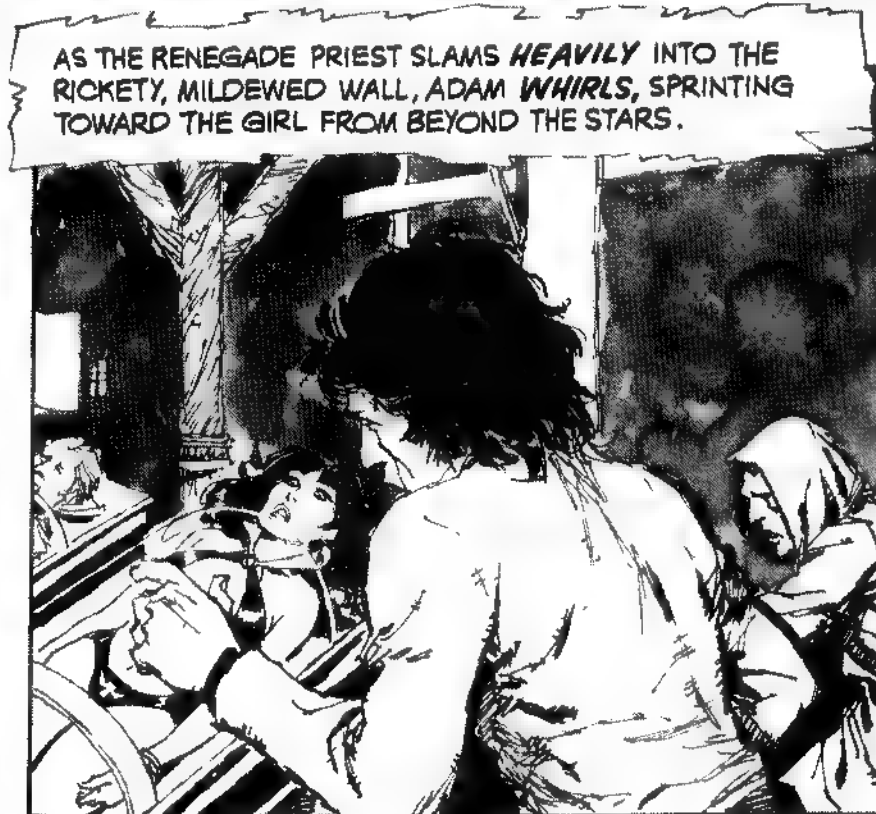
YOU KEPT ME FROM THE NECTAR I WORKED SO HARD FOR IN COLORADO--AND BY RIGHTS, THEN, YOU OWE ME YOURS!



SO NOW, BEFORE YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR FORM, YOU WILL REPAY THAT DEBT.

YOU WILL DRAIN NICELY IN THAT POSITION....





NOW YOU KNOW
WHAT YOU *DID* TO ME
WHEN YOU TOUCHED
ME WITH THAT
CRUCIFIX!

AGONY WITHOUT *END*
AND DEATH WITHOUT *HOPE* LAY
WITH ME IN THE SNOW, THE FIRE-
RAVAGED *SHARDS* OF MY BODY FIT
ONLY FOR *CARRION*-- IF THEY
WERE *STARVING!*

STILL, THE DISCIPLES
WATCHED *OVER* ME--
AND THEY *REINCARNATED*
ME AS A LIVING *ENTITY*--

--BUT THEY HAVE
THEIR *PUNISHMENTS*
FOR FAILURE, AN THEY
HAVE THEIR *JOKES!*

MY LEGS
WERE RUINED,
CRUMBLING--

THEY
FOUND ME *NEW*
ONES!





BUT MY *POWER*, IF ANYTHING, HAS *INCREASED*! I COMMAND *FIRE*--

--AND THAT WILL BE YOUR *DOOM*!

NO, ADAM--*RUN*! HE'S TOO *STRONG*--TOO *POWERFUL*!



YOU'RE *RIGHT*, VAMPIRELLA! I DON'T HAVE TO HOLD BACK AS I DID *BEFORE*!

THE DARKLING DISCIPLES *ALWAYS* TRIUMPH IN THE END, AS THEY HAVE SINCE THE BIRTH OF *TIME*--



--AS THEY WILL TILL ITS *DEATH*!



NOOOO!

AT THE SOUND OF FLESH MEETING FLOOR, THE GIRL FROM DRAKULON CHOKES OFF HER INCIPIENT SCREAM. WHEREAS, MOMENTS *BEFORE*, HER FATE LAY IN ADAM VAN HELSING'S HANDS, SHE KNOWS NOW THAT *HIS* FATE BELONGS TO *HER*--AND IT IS THE SEASONED *HUNTRESS* THAT IS NEEDED HERE, NOT THE HEARTSICK *WOMAN*.

JONAS--IS HE... *DEAD*?

I DON'T KNOW. DOES IT *MATTER*?

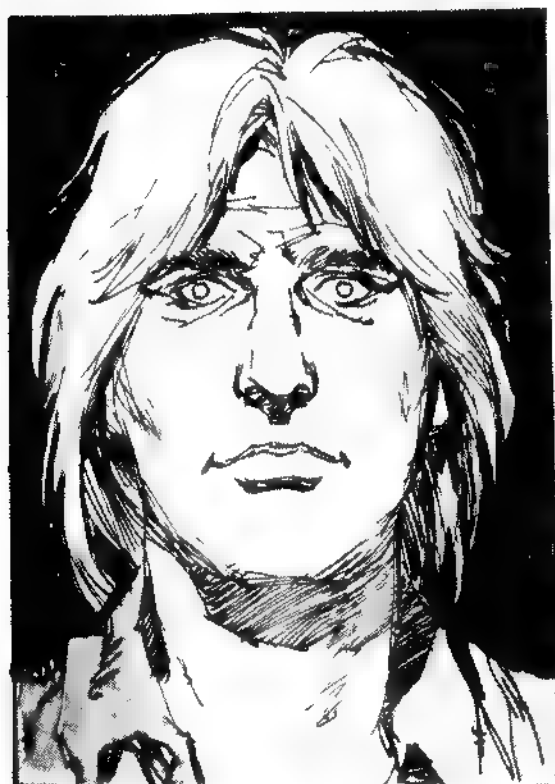


BUT AS VAMPIRELLA RACKS HER BRAIN FOR A MANNER OF *ESCAPE*, SOMETHING *ELSE* IS HAPPENING--IN THE BRAIN OF HIM WHO ONCE CALLED HIMSELF *GARY*.

IT IS NOTHING *MIRACULOUS*, NOR EVEN *PRAISEWORTHY*. IT IS ONLY THAT HIS *BASIC NATURE* FLOATS TO THE SURFACE OF HIS ENCHANTED MIND, LIKE AN OILY *BUBBLE*, LIKE A DEAD *FISH*...

THE NATURE THAT IS, SIMPLY, ANIMAL *LUST*.

...THE NATURE THAT GRADES AND *CATEGORIZES* THIS GIRL AS *MEAT*, LIKE HUNDREDS *BEFORE* HER... BUT MEAT TO BE *TOUCHED*...*POSSESSED*...





...AND WITH THOUGHT COMES *INTELLIGENCE*-- A *FREE* INTELLIGENCE THAT SEES SALLY SUE CARTIER...

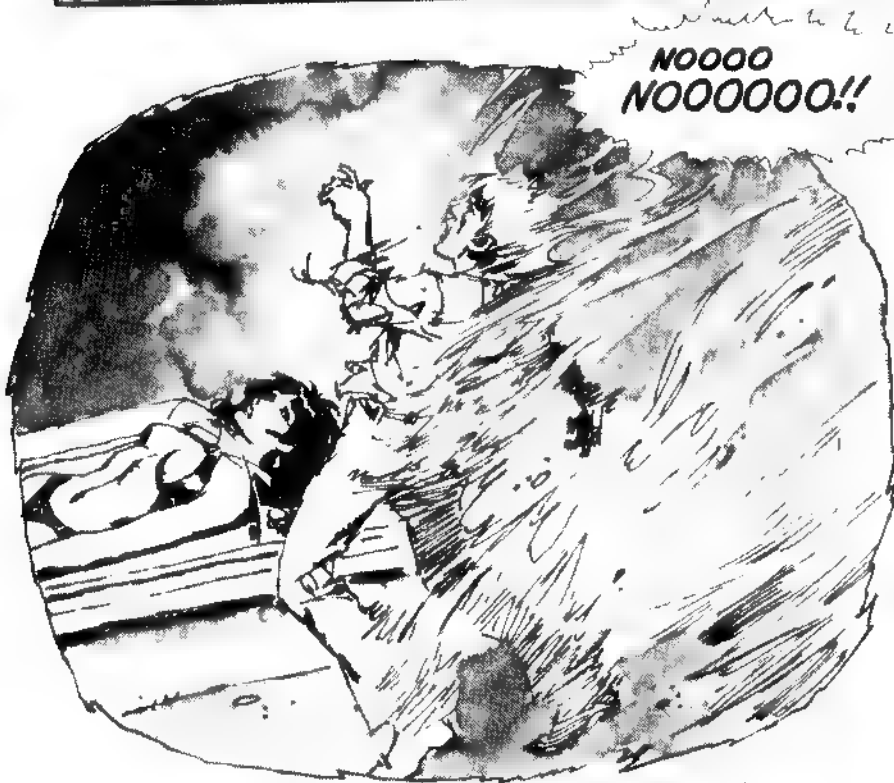
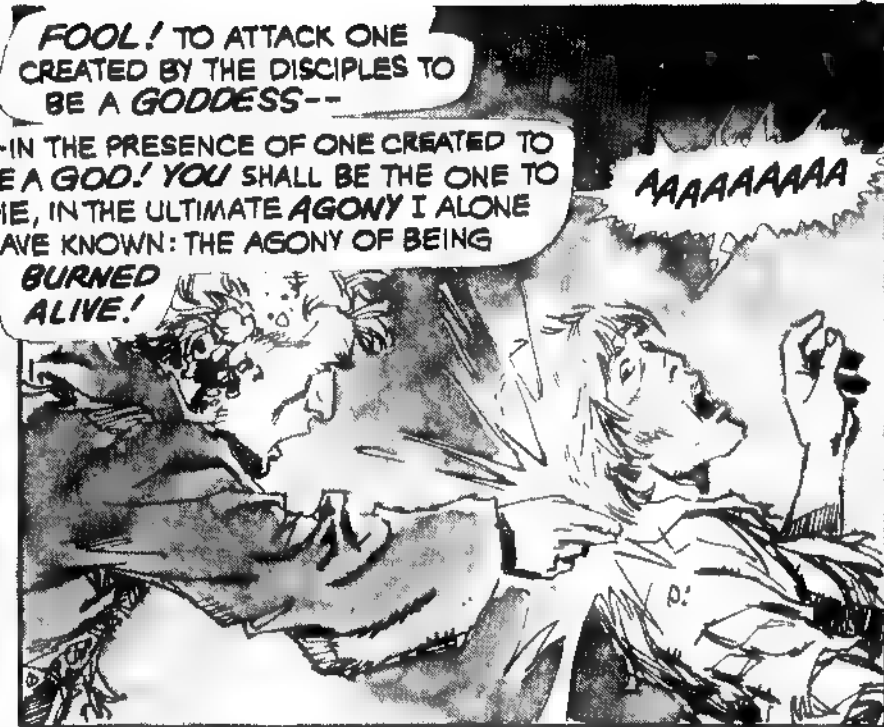


...AS SHE *REALLY* IS.

NO *LONGER* THE WOMAN OF MEN'S *DREAMS*... NO LONGER EVEN THE HOMELY *TEENAGER* DESPERATE FOR LOVE... NO LONGER *ALIVE*. GARY DOES NOT *UNDERSTAND*-- BUT HE *KNOWS*!

HE KNOWS HE IS FACE TO FACE WITH UNDREAMT *HORROR*, AND THE MIND JUST RESCUED *COLLAPSES* AGAIN IN FINAL *NAUSEA*, RATHER THAN *LIVE* WITH THAT THOUGHT!





GARY STUMBLES... FALLS... AS THE NERVES TO HIS LEG MUSCLES FRY, AND HE SENSES THAT DEATH IS BUT SECONDS AWAY A COOLING, SOOTHING DEATH THAT WILL QUENCH HIS SCARLET AGONY, A DEATH HIS SOUL SCREAMS FOR--



--BUT THERE IS STILL ONE LAST *THOUGHT* TO BE THOUGHT, BEFORE HIS BRAIN COOLS FOR ETERNITY: AN *EPITAPH* OF SORTS...





FREE! THE FLAMES
WELTED THIS PRISON... AFTER
ALL THIS TIME, I'M FREE!



YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS! YOU
CAN'T ATTACK US... TWO DARKLING
DISCIPLES, EITHER OF WHOM CARRIES
MORE ELEMENTAL POWER IN A
FINGER THAN YOU COULD EVER
HOPE TO COMMAND--!



YOU HORRIBLE--! YOU
ROBBED ME OF MY SLAVE!
SHE'S MINE, JONAS!

NO! I OWE HER TOO
MUCH PAIN! I OWE EVERY
ONE OF THEM, BUT HER
MOST OF ALL!



DIE,
VAMPIRELLA!

DIE--
WHAT?

TO THE ANCIENTS, THERE WERE FOUR ELEMENTS:
EARTH, AIR, FIRE, AND WATER... EACH UNIQUE, EACH
FANTASTICALLY POWERFUL--

--AND EACH WITH POWER OVER THE OTHERS! MIX
FIRE AND WATER-- THE RESULT IS TUMULT!



STEAM!
YOU STUPID
WITCH!

I COULDN'T EVEN HAVE
WISHED FOR THAT-- BUT I'M
AWFULLY GLAD IT HAPPENED.
JONAS COULD WELL HAVE BEEN
RIGHT ABOUT MY CHANCES.

NOW, IF I CAN FIND
ADAM AND PENDRAGON IN
THIS MIST, WE'LL BE ABLE
TO RUN FOR IT-- AND
PRAY!





JUST IN *TIME*! THIS WHOLE BUILDING WILL BE A *BONFIRE* IN MINUTES--AND PENDRAGON WOULD HAVE BEEN THE *FIRST* TO DIE!



EASY...EASY. I DON'T DARE HURT HIM AT *THIS* STAGE...

STOP RIGHT *THERE*, VAMPIRELLA! YOUR LUCK MAY BE *INCREDIBLE*--

--BUT IT CAN'T LAST *FOREVER*! IF YOU WANT TO LEAVE THIS SHACK *ALIVE*, IT'LL HAVE TO BE BECAUSE I'M *DEAD*!

ALL MY LIFE, I'VE BEEN SECOND RATE-- *THIRD RATE*, EVEN IN *EVERYTHING*. I COULDN'T EVEN *DIE* CLEANLY.



BUT I PLAY THE CARDS I'M *DEALT*-- AND IF FATHER JONAS WANTS ME AS HIS *BLOOD QUEEN*, I'M GONNA DO MY *DAMNDEST* FOR HIM. YOU'VE SCREWED UP *EVERYTHING* I'VE TRIED TODAY--AND NOW YOU'RE GONNA *PAY*!

FLICKERINGLY, THE *PLIGHT* OF THIS PATHETIC CHILD *TOUCHES* THE WOMAN FROM DRAKULON--BUT IT IS THE SEASONED *HUNTRESS* THAT IS NEEDED, AND VAMPIRELLA *HARDENS* HER HEART, TO DO WHAT SHE *MUST*!



MUSCLE AND SINEW THAT HAVE WITHSTOOD THE RIGORS OF *DRAKULON* STRUT AGAINST THE UNNATURAL *POWER* OF THE *BAYOU WITCH*--

--AND THEN *REASON* WINS OUT AGAINST *MANIA*!



LIKE A **MOTH** DRAWN TO DEATH IN A DANCING FLAME, SALLY SUE CARTIER HURDLES **HELPLESSLY** INTO THE ROARING HEART OF THE **INFERNO**--

--AND LEAVES A SHOWER OF BILLOWING **SPARKS** AS SHE CRASHES ON THROUGH THE CARBONIZED FLOOR, TO DISAPPEAR **FOREVER** FROM THE SIGHT OF MAN!

SUPPLELY, VAMPIRELLA WHIRLS, **SEARCHING** FOR A GLIMPSE OF HER **OTHER** FOE THROUGH THE HEAT-TWISTED AIR--

--BUT THERE IS **NOTHING**. FATHER JONAS IS-- **GONE!**



COME ON, VAMPIRELLA-- WE'VE GOT TO GET **OUT** OF HERE! THIS PLACE IS COMING DOWN AROUND OUR **EARS!**



HELP ME WITH PENDRAGON, ADAM! HE'S STILL **UNCONSCIOUS!**



EPILOGUE: SEVENTEEN MINUTES LATER, THE TUMBLE-DOWN SHANTY THAT PLAYED HOST TO AN EVE OF RAGING **NIGHTMARES** LIES DEAD AND SMOKING, ALREADY BEING INTERRED BY THE SUCKING **SWAMP**. BAYOU PARISH HAS **NOT** NOTICEABLY CHANGED.

--BUT JONAS WASN'T **THERE**, WHERE DID HE **GO**? THERE WAS ONLY ONE EXIT, AND YOU WOULD HAVE **SEEN** HIM IF HE'D GONE **THAT** WAY.

DO YOU SUPPOSE HE FELL THROUGH THE **FLOOR**, LIKE THE **GIRL**?

THAT'S THE **SIMPLEST** EXPLANATION, ADAM... BUT WE ACCEPTED THE **SIMPLEST** EXPLANATION **LAST** TIME. **THIS** TIME... I WISH WE KNEW FOR **CERTAIN**.

OH, MY HEAD...



GONE, PENDRAGON-- GONE THE WAY OF **MANY** BEAUTIFUL DREAMS...

WHERE ARE WE? WHAT'S **HAPPENED**? AND-- WHERE'S **SALLY SUE**?

...UP IN **SMOKE**...

NEXT: INTO THE INFERNO!

HERE'S A JOLTIN'
JUNGLE OPUS TO MAKE
YOUR BLOOD BOIL AND
COIL... A LITTLE DERANGED
DITTY I CALL...

COBRA QUEEN

JAICE PACKSTON'S FACE WAS BURIED BENEATH A LAYER OF SWEAT AFTER ANOTHER FULL DAY UNDER THE HOT SUN OF INDIA. BUT HE, AND HIS COMPANIONS, THE DISTINGUISHED SIR REGINALD OF LONDON, AND THE SOUTHERN PHYSICIAN, DR. JAMES LONGLEY, MOVED ONWARD... ONWARD...

BLIMEY, JACOB!
WE'VE BEEN TREKING
THROUGH THIS INFERNAL
JUNGLE FOR DAYS, NOW!
AND STILL NOTHING
IN SIGHT!

SIR REGINALD'S
RIGHT, I RECKON!
I MEAN, WE BEEN
JUST MARCHIN' ALONG
HERE, CHOPPIN' OUR
WAY THROUGH ALL
THIS HERE FOLIAGE
AND EVERYTHING, AND
STILL WE AIN'T COME
ACROSS WHAT WE
BEEN LOOKIN' FOR!
DON'T YOU THINK
WE OUGHTA BE
TURNIN' BACK?

NO! I'M NOT
TAKING ONE STEP
BACK TOWARD
CIVILIZATION UNTIL I FIND
WHAT I SET OUT TO
FIND! THAT **ANCIENT MAP**
IS GOING TO LEAD US
RIGHT TO THE LOST
**TEMPLE OF THE
COBRA...**

...AND THE
LEGENDARY
**COBRA
QUEEN!**

BUT, JACOB!
WE'VE BEEN
FOLLOWING THAT MAP
TO THE LETTER! IF
THERE WERE ANY RUINS OR
ANYTHING IN THIS AREA,
WE'D HAVE FOUND THEM
BY NOW!

THEY'RE AROUND
HERE... SOMEWHERE!
I JUST KNOW IT! I CAN
FEEL IT! DIDN'T THE FACT
THAT THE NATIVES WOULDN'T
GO WITH US TIP YOU OFF
THAT WE WERE ON THE
TRACK OF SOMETHING
THEY FEARED? WELL,
I'M GOIN' ON!



YOU TWO CAN TURN BACK IF YOU WANT! OR STAY HERE COUNTING YOUR FINGERS AND TOES!

WAIT, JACOB! WE'RE NOT GOING TO DESERT YOU! NOT AFTER ALL WE THREE HAVE GONE THROUGH TO GET THIS FAR! WAIT!!!



YEAH, COME ON, NOW! DON'T HOLD THIS AGIN' US! I AIN'T ONE TO TURN JACK RABBIT AN' HIGHTAIL IT!

THAT GOES FOR ME AS WELL!

GOOD! I HOPED I COULD--



GOOD LORD! STAY BACK, BOTH OF YOU!

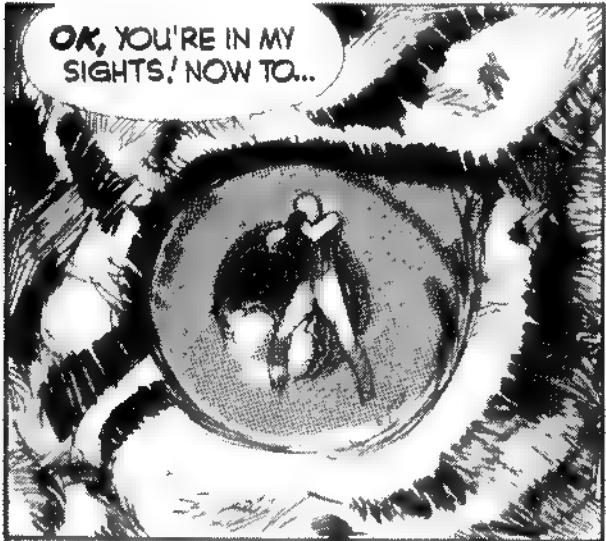


RRRGGRRRRWWWWW

IT'S THE BIGGEST CAT I EVER SAW! A REGULAR MONSTER!

NOW DON'T MOVE! I THINK I CAN GET A COUPLE OF SLUGS RIGHT INTO HIS BRAIN IF WE DON'T EXCITE HIM! QUIET, NOW...

BUT THEN, AS UNEXPECTEDLY AS IT HAD APPEARED...



OK, YOU'RE IN MY SIGHTS! NOW TO...

GREAT GLORY! IT JUST STOPPED! LIKE IT SMELLED SOMETHIN' MORE THAN YOUR GUN!



YE GODS! DID YOU SEE THAT? I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO SHOOT!





I SAY! THAT BLOODY BEAST IS JUST STARING UP INTO THE TREETOP LIKE SOMETHING IS UP THERE!

AN'IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, THAT **SOMETHING** AIN'T GONNA STAY HIDDEN MUCH LONGER....!

SNIFF!
SNIFF!
GRRRR!



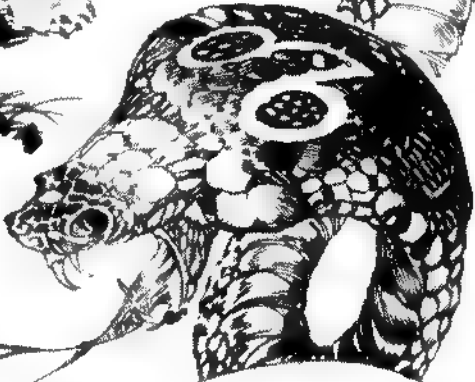
THERE! **THERE'S** OUR ANSWER!

W-WHAT IS THAT... THAT THING!

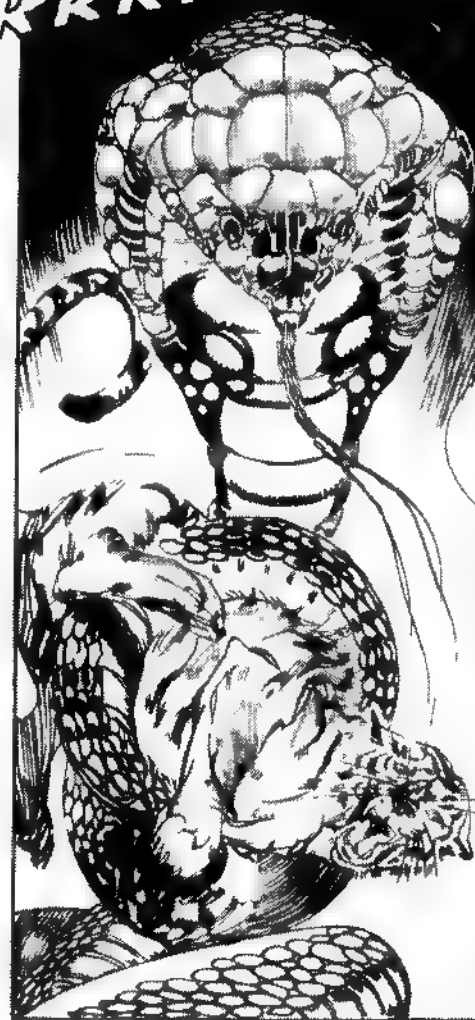
D-DON'T... ASK... ME!!!



GRRRRRRRRRRRRRR!

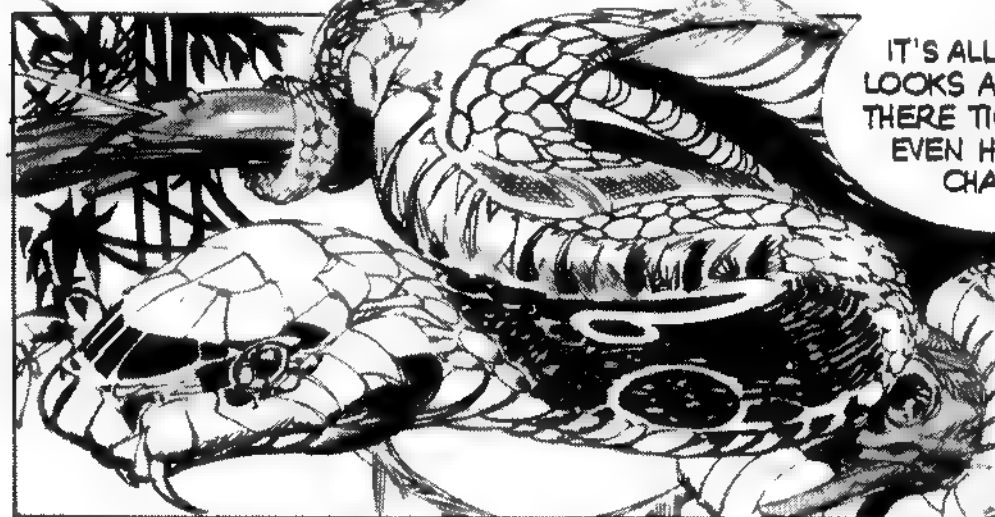


IT'S A COBRA! A **GIANT COBRA!** LARGER THAN ANY BOA OR PYTHON IN THE WORLD!



B-BUT... COBRAS DON'T GROW THAT LARGE!

NOPE! AND I AIN'T NEVER SEEN ONE FIGHT LIKE A CONSTRUCTOR BEFORE!



IT'S ALL OVER! LOOKS AS IF THAT THERE TIGER NEVER EVEN HAD A CHANCE!

NOW THERE'S NO DOUBT.

AND NOW THAT MONSTROSITY IS GOING BACK INTO THE JUNGLE!



WE'RE ON THE
RIGHT TRACK! THE
LEGENDS TALK OF
A GIGANTIC
COBRA!

A HUGE SNAKE
THAT ISN'T REALLY
A SNAKE AT ALL...
BUT A... **WOMAN!**

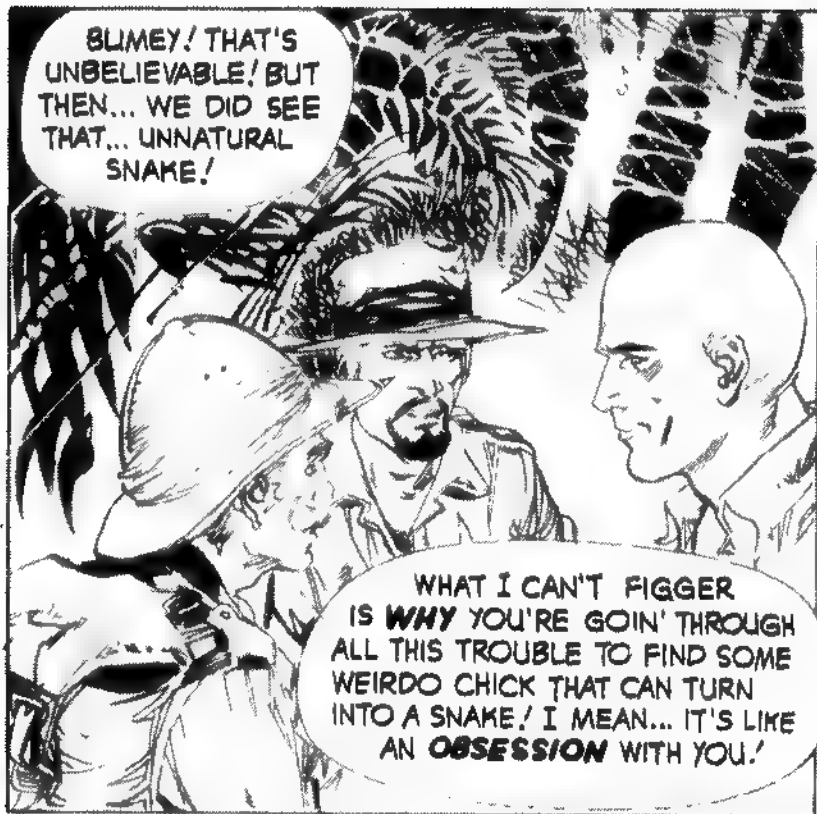
W-WHAT? WHAT'S
THAT YOU'RE
TRYING TO SAY?
YOU MEAN...

AS OLD AS THE TEMPLE
ITSELF, WHICH SPANS
CENTURIES! OF
UNFATHOMABLE BEAUTY!
BUT EQUALLY EVIL,
EXISTING FOR ONLY
ONE PURPOSE...

...TO TRANSFORM
HERSELF INTO THE
GIANT SNAKE... MUCH
IN THE FASHION OF THE
EUROPEAN **WEREWOLF**...
AND TO INFLICT HER
OWN PEOPLE WITH
HER VENOM...

YOU HEARD ME!
A WOMAN!! THE **COBRA**
QUEEN, RULER OF THE LOST
TEMPLE OF THE **COBRA!**

...TO POISON
THEIR BLOOD AND
THEIR WILL, TURNING
THEM INTO HELPLESS
SLAVES... INTO
MINDLESS, WALKING
ZOMBIES!



BLIMEY! THAT'S UNBELIEVABLE! BUT THEN... WE DID SEE THAT... UNNATURAL SNAKE!

WHAT I CAN'T FIGGER IS **WHY** YOU'RE GOIN' THROUGH ALL THIS TROUBLE TO FIND SOME WEIRDO CHICK THAT CAN TURN INTO A SNAKE! I MEAN... IT'S LIKE AN **OBSESSION** WITH YOU!



I DON'T CARE **WHAT** IT IS, DOCTOR... JUST SO IT LEADS ME TO THAT TEMPLE!



THAT NIGHT, AFTER CAMP HAS BEEN SET UP, THE ADVENTURERS ARE GREETED BY UNIVITED TERROR...



IT'S SIR REGINALD!

I KNOW! SOMETHIN' GOT 'IM!



LONGLEY! TAKE A LOOK! IS HE --?



DEAD! NOTHIN' I CAN DO TA SAVE 'IM! THE POISON ALREADY REACHED 'IS HEART!

POISON! THEN IT WAS DEFINITELY THE WORK OF...



IT WAS A **COBRA!**

NO MORE WORDS ARE SPOKEN...
EVEN AS THE SUN AGAIN BEATS
DOWN OVER A QUIET BURIAL...
AND...

PACKSTON MUST
BE TAKIN' THIS PURTTY
HARD! HE AIN'T SAID A
SINGLE THING ALL
MORNIN.' WELL, SIR
REGINALD WAS ONE OF
THE BEST FELLARS
AROUND!



THEN... PACKSTON AND DR.
LONGLEY HALT, THEIR EYES
BULGING AT THE AWESOME
DISPLAY OF...

AMAZONS'
LOOK AT THEM...
MAGNIFICENT AND
THEIR LOIN-CLOTHS...
COBRA SKINS!

BUT THEIR
EYES... LIKE YOU
TOLD US ABOUT...
ZOMBIES!

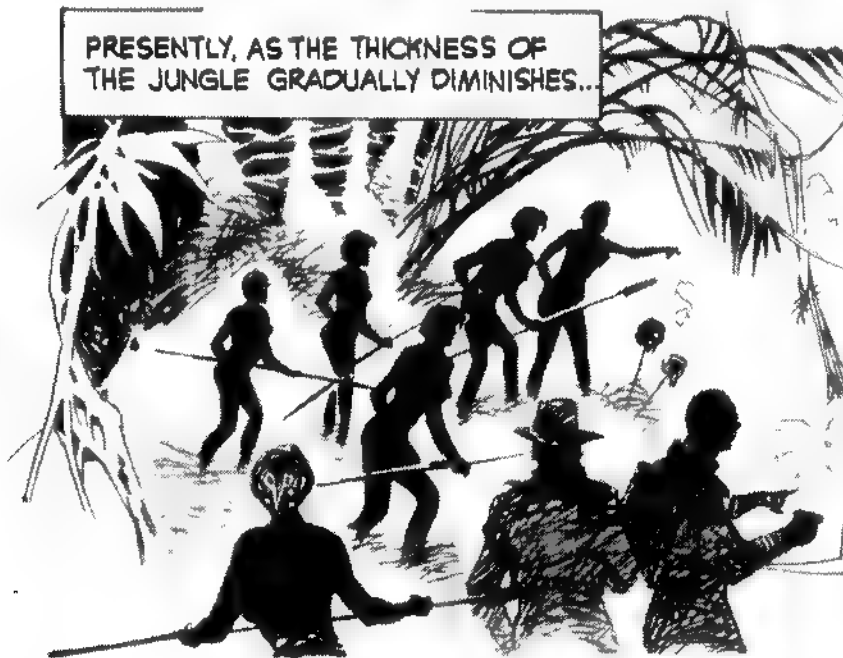


I KNOW! BUT
DON'T FIGHT THEM!
LET THEM TAKE US
WHERE THEY WANT
TO! IF THEY
WANTED TO KILL
US THEY WOULD
HAVE ALREADY
DONE IT!

RECKON YOU'RE
RIGHT! IFFEN WE
TRIED TO FIGHT NOW,
WE'D BE **SPEAR**
TA DEATH! AND I
DON'T HANKER FER
THAT KINDA
MISBEHAVIN'!



PRESENTLY, AS THE THICKNESS OF
THE JUNGLE GRADUALLY DIMINISHES...



THERE IT IS, LONGLEY!
WHAT I'VE HEARD **WHISPERS**
OF, **DREAMED** OF FINDING...
ALL MY LIFE! THE **TEMPLE**
OF THE COBRA!



I DON'T LIKE THIS HERE PLACE! SMELL THAT? LIKE THE STINK OF A SNAKE! NOW I KINDA WISH WE'D OF FOUGHT BACK WHEN WE HAD THE CHANCE!

SHUT UP!
LOOK THERE!

THE COBRA
QUEEN!!!

I SEE THAT MY LITTLE ATTEMPTS TO FRIGHTEN YOU AWAY IN THE JUNGLE HAVE FAILED! NO MATTER! YOU HAVE COME TO FIND THE COBRA QUEEN... AND YOU SHALL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED! AS SOON AS YOU FEEL MY FANGS...

BOY HOWDY, JAKE!
IFFEN' YOU GOT SOME TRICK FOR HANDLIN' HER UP YOUR SLEEVE... PULL IT OUT **NOW!**

BARE YOUR FANGS ALL YOU LIKE, MY BEAUTIFUL QUEEN! THAT WON'T SCARE ME... NOT AFTER THE TROUBLE I'VE GONE THROUGH TO FIND YOU... PROVE TO MYSELF THAT YOU DO **EXIST!**

NOT EXACTLY
A TRICK,
DOCTOR...

MORE LIKE **PROVING MYSELF!** ALL MY LIFE I'VE BEEN A MISFIT... A **FREAK**... NOW AT LAST I'VE FOUND MY **PLACE!** AND WHAT BETTER PLACE...

FOR A **KING COBRA** THAN BESIDE HIS **QUEEN!**

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS... A **MALE!** ONCE MORE THE CULT OF THE COBRA CAN THRIVE... AND **SPREAD!**

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SUCH CHATTERING, MORTAL? IF YOU THINK TO PROLONG YOUR LIFE BY IDLE TALK... WATCH! AND **TREMBLE!**

GNYAHHHHHHHHH!

HMMN! WONDER IF PACKSTON FOUND OUT ABOUT THE QUEEN THROUGH A COMPUTER DATING SERVICE? THEY CERTAINLY SHARE THE SAME INTERESTS. IN THIS CASE, DR. LONGLEY!

SCREAMING YOUR HEAD OFF BECAUSE YOU'RE MISSING...

VAMPIRELLA

BACK ISSUES

IS YOUR COLLECTION OF THE WORLD'S GRUE-
VIEST COMICS MAGAZINE INCOMPLETE? STOP
GNASHING YOUR FANGS OUT AND ORDER
THOSE MISSING ISSUES NOW!



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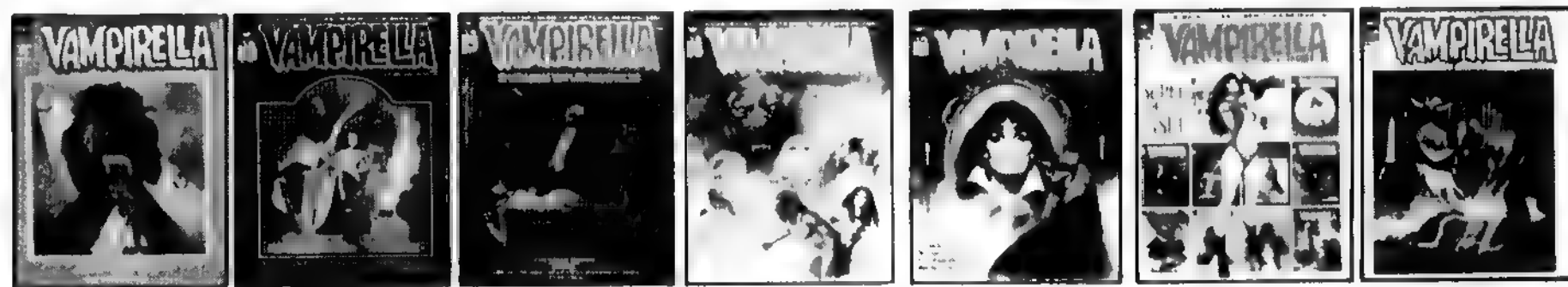
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DON'T WAIT! MAIL COUPON TODAY!

VAMPIRELLA

VAMPIRELLA BACK ISSUE DEPT.
P.O. BOX 430, MURRAY HILL STATION
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016

I enclose \$_____ for back issues indicated

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> # 1 (\$3.25) | <input type="checkbox"/> #13 (\$1.75) |
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PROLOGUE:

SHE TURNS AWAY FROM THE BREAKFAST TABLE FOR JUST A MOMENT, TO POUR HER MORNING COFFEE...

AND, WHEN SHE TURNS BACK...

OH MY GOD! HOW... HOW DID THAT GET THERE?

... AND BITES INTO IT, THE RODENT BLOOD DRIBBLING DOWN HER CHIN...

ALMOST INSTANTLY, THE SHOCK OF SEEING THE DEAD RAT IS FORGOTTEN, AND, AS THOUGH IN A TRANCE, SHE WALKS TO THE TABLE...


... GENTLY LIFTS THE RAT TO HER MOUTH...

NO! DEAR GOD!

WHAT AM I DOING?


I'M CRACKING UP! I'M... I'M...

THEN...



NOTHING LIKE A CAT TO TAKE
YOUR MIND OFF THINGS.
CHERYL WAS ALONE. SHE
NEEDED A CAT TO OCCUPY
HER TIME LET'S
JUST...

CALL IT COMPANIONSHIP!



NOW YOU STAND
OVER THE DEAD BODY
OF YOUR FORMER LOVER...
THE KNIFE YOU HOLD
STILL DRIPPING HIS BLOOD...
AND YOU LAUGH. ONCE YOU
LOVED THIS MAN, BUT NOW
YOU LAUGH...

HA HA HA HA

YOU
ASKED FOR
IT! YOU TRIED
TO COME
BETWEEN
US!

NOW,
NO ONE
WILL **EVER**
COME
BETWEEN
US!

YOU ARE GLAD THAT HE IS
DEAD. BUT STILL, SOMETHING
IN THE BACK OF YOUR MIND
ASKS, "HOW DID IT EVER
COME TO THIS?" YOU
THINK BACK...

... AND YOU REMEMBER AN
AFTERNOON WHEN YOU
STOOD LOOKING IN A PET
SHOP WINDOW...



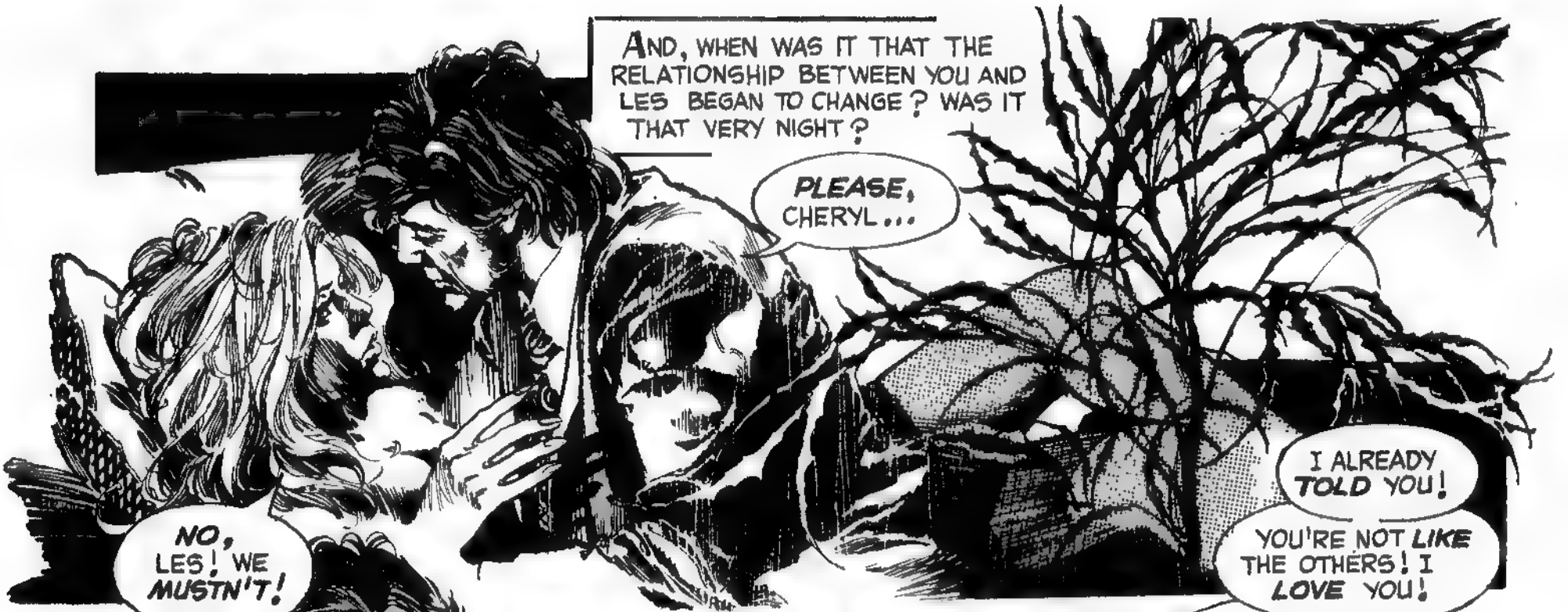
OH, WOW!
HE'S
BEAUTIFUL!
LONG, BLACK
HAIR! SO
SLEEK!
SHINY!

BUT...
WHY NOT?

I'VE GOT
ENOUGH MONEY TO
BUY HIM! AND HE
SHOULDN'T BE THAT
EXPENSIVE TO
CARE FOR!

A PET IS
JUST WHAT I NEED!
A **COMPANION**
TO TAKE MY MIND
OFF MY TROUBLES!

IF ONLY
I COULD
AFFORD
TO--



AND, WHEN WAS IT THAT THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOU AND
LES BEGAN TO CHANGE? WAS IT
THAT VERY NIGHT?

PLEASE,
CHERYL...

NO,
LES! WE
MUSTN'T!

I ALREADY
TOLD YOU!

YOU'RE NOT LIKE
THE OTHERS! I
LOVE YOU!



BUT...WE
LOVE EACH
OTHER,
DON'T WE?

YOU'VE
TOLD ME
ABOUT ALL THE
OTHER MEN!
WHY CAN'T
WE--

IT WAS
DIFFERENT
WITH THE
OTHERS!

AND THAT'S WHY I
WANT OUR RELATIONSHIP
TO BE DIFFERENT I
WANT US TO WAIT!



BUT,
DARLING, I
CAN'T WAIT!
NOT ANY
LONGER!
I'M...

MEEOW!



A CAT??
HOW THE HELL DID
THAT GET IN
HERE?



I BROUGHT
IT HERE!
THAT'S HOW!

I JUST BOUGHT
IT THIS MORNING!

OH.

I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW
YOU LIKED CATS!

THOSE EYES! DOES IT
HAVE TO KEEP LOOKING
AT ME LIKE THAT? ALMOST
LIKE IT'S PLANNING TO
ATTACK ME OR...OR
SOMETHING!



LATER THAT SAME NIGHT,
AFTER LES HAD LEFT...

IT'S NO
GOOD, KITTY!
I WAS **WRONG**
ABOUT LES! HE
ISN'T DIFFERENT
AT ALL! HE'S
JUST LIKE THE
OTHERS!

HE
DOESN'T
CARE ABOUT
ME... JUST
MY BODY!
THAT'S ALL
HE'S AFTER!

HE CERTAINLY
PROVED **THAT**
TONIGHT!

WELL, **TWO**
CAN PLAY THE
GAME!

IF HE'S GOING
TO TRY 'N TAKE
ME FOR EVERYTHING
HE CAN GET, THEN
I'M GONNA DO THE
SAME WITH
HIM!

HEY! WHAT'S
GOING ON?
FEEL **DIZZY...**
WEAK...

HUNH?

WH-- WHAT'S
HAPPENING AROUND
HERE? THIS DOESN'T
MAKE ANY **SENSE!**

WAS THAT WHEN YOU FIRST
BLACKED OUT?

BUT THEN YOU NOTICED YOUR
FINGERNAILS! THEY WERE
BROKEN, AND THERE WAS A
BIT OF FABRIC CAUGHT ON
ONE OF THE JAGGED EDGES...

THE NEXT DAY WAS
UNEVENTFUL. THEN,
THAT NIGHT...

PLEASE,
CHERYL...

MUST'VE
DOZED OFF!
IT'S-- **WHA--?**

THE **SOFA!**
ALL **TORN!**

THAT **CAT**
MUST HAVE--

OH, YES,
LES! YES!

TAKE ME! PLEASE
TAKE ME!

WEEKS PASSED... AND THEN,
IN A SMALL BAR NOT FAR
FROM YOUR APARTMENT...

I DON'T
KNOW WHAT'S
HAPPENED
TO CHERYL!

SHE'S CHANGED!
REALLY CHANGED!





IT WAS THEN THAT YOU
SPRANG OUT OF HIDING...

LIKE AN ENRAGED
ALLEY CAT, YOU STRUCK
AGAIN... AND AGAIN...
AND AGAIN...

FFFFFFFFFFFFTTTT!

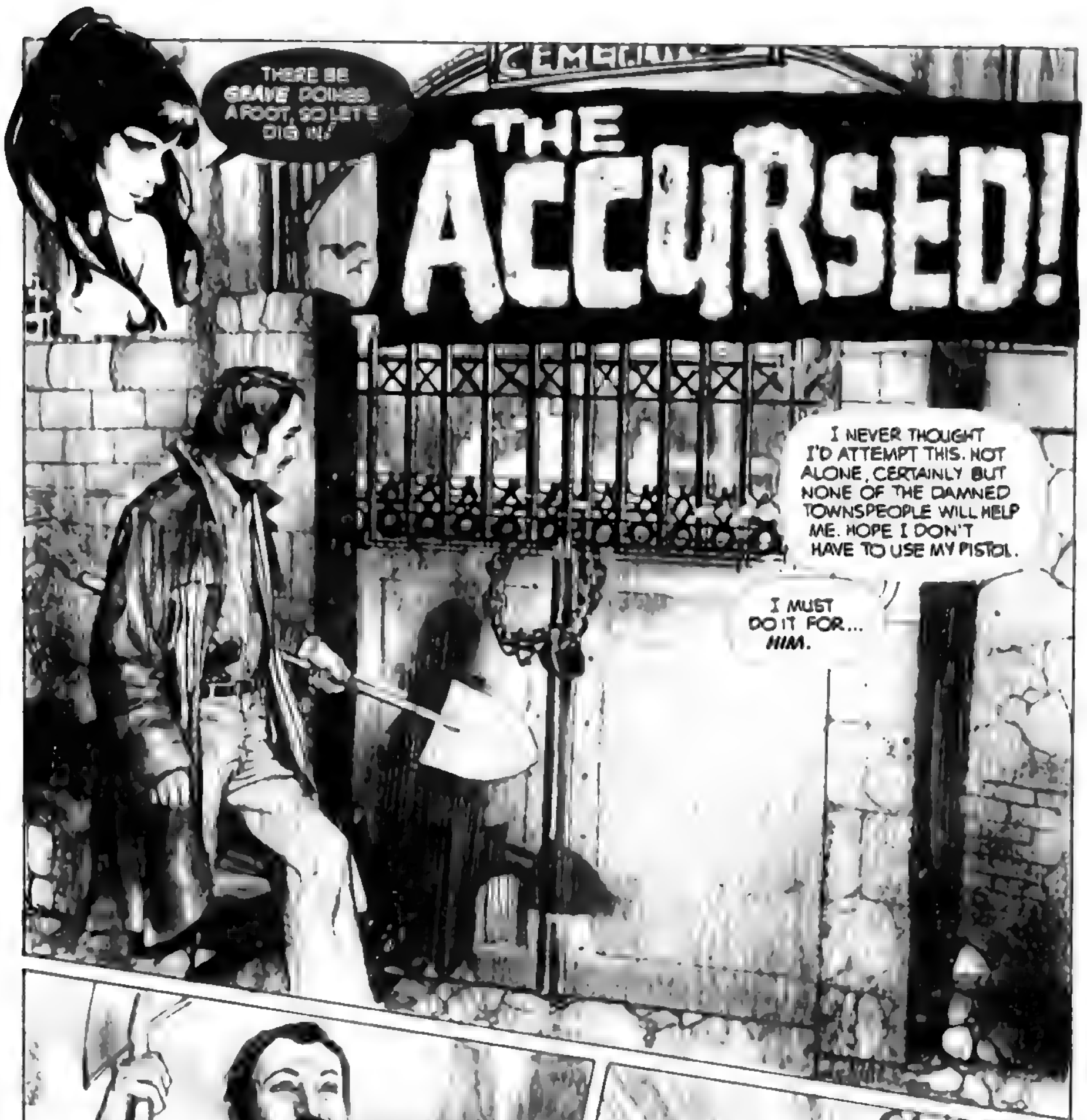
AND NOW YOU STAND
OVER THE BODY OF YOUR
FORMER LOVER... THE
KNIFE YOU HOLD STILL
DRIPPING HIS BLOOD...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S
HAPPENED TO ME, LES!
I **SHOULD** FEEL GUILTY
ABOUT WHAT I'VE DONE TO
YOU! BUT I **DON'T**!

I **HAD** TO DO IT! I
COULDN'T **HELP**
MYSELF!

THIS IS **OUR**
DOMAIN! YOU HAD NO
RIGHT BREAKING IN
HERE AND THREATENING
US! YOU **DESERVED**
TO DIE!

CAT GOT
YOUR TONGUE?
POOR LES, CAT
BUT HIM I
GUESS.



A MILLION CORPSE-EYES FASTEN UPON HIM. A WIND BLOWS UP, MOCKING HIM WITH MIDNIGHT CHILL. UNNUMBERED TOMBSTONES FACE HIM ACCUSINGLY. THIS IS A PLACE OF DEATH. WHAT RIGHT HAS HE TO BE HERE?

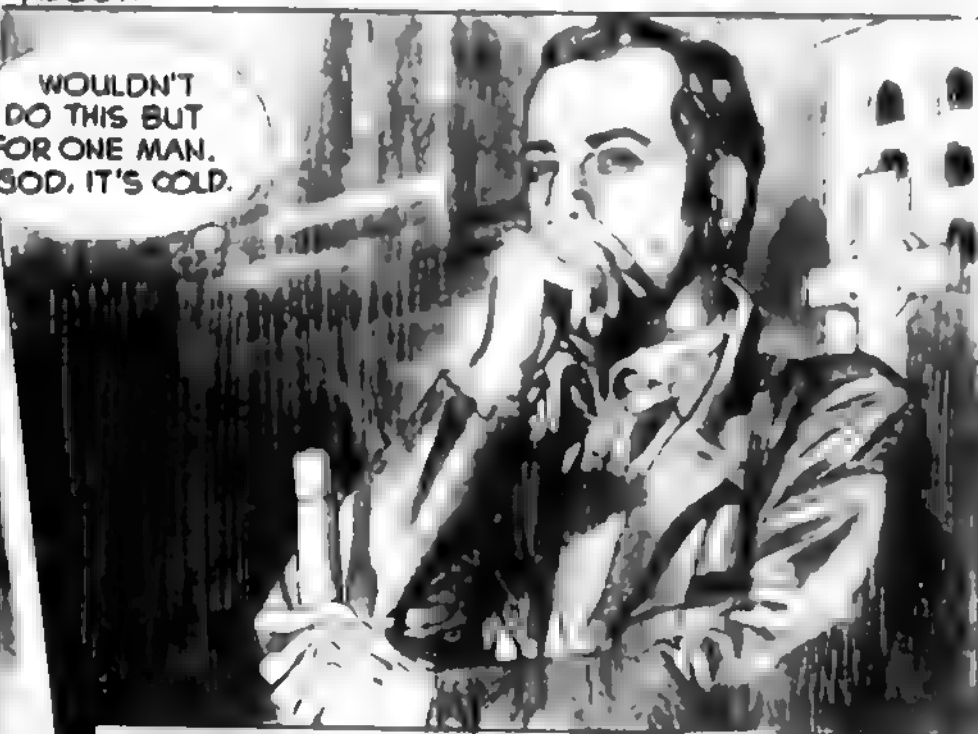


NEVER FELT SO ALONE. IT BEGINS NOW.

HE SENSES THE HORROR BEFORE SEEING IT, PASSING UNDER A GROUP OF GHOST-TREES. A SLAVERING, UNHOLY STALKER OF THE NIGHT.

PULLING THE COLLAR OF HIS COAT TIGHTER, TRASK INFILTRATES THE UNMOVING SEA OF ANCIENT DEATH, GLANCING CAUTIOUSLY ABOUT.

WOULDN'T DO THIS BUT FOR ONE MAN. GOD, IT'S COLD.



HE RECOGNIZES THE DISTORTED FEATURES OF GREY ARKHAM... SORCERER! AND THE BEAST READIES TO SPRING...



... BY THE ALMIGHTY...!



GRR-OWWWW!

POW! POW! POW!

ANOTHER LEGEND
DISPROVED. YOU CAN
SLAY A WEREWOLF WITH
ORDINARY BULLETS. AT
LEAST ONE IN THE
IMAGE OF ITS CREATOR.
WHAT OTHER DEMONS
DID ARKHAN LEAVE
TO GUARD HIS
GRAVE?

ANCESTRAL FEARS OF THE DEAD HAUNT HIM,
SHRIEKING FROM GHOUL DARKNESS IGNORED BY THE
SCANT MOONLIGHT. HE GRIMLY AWAITS THE NEW
TERRORS HE IS SURE WILL COME.

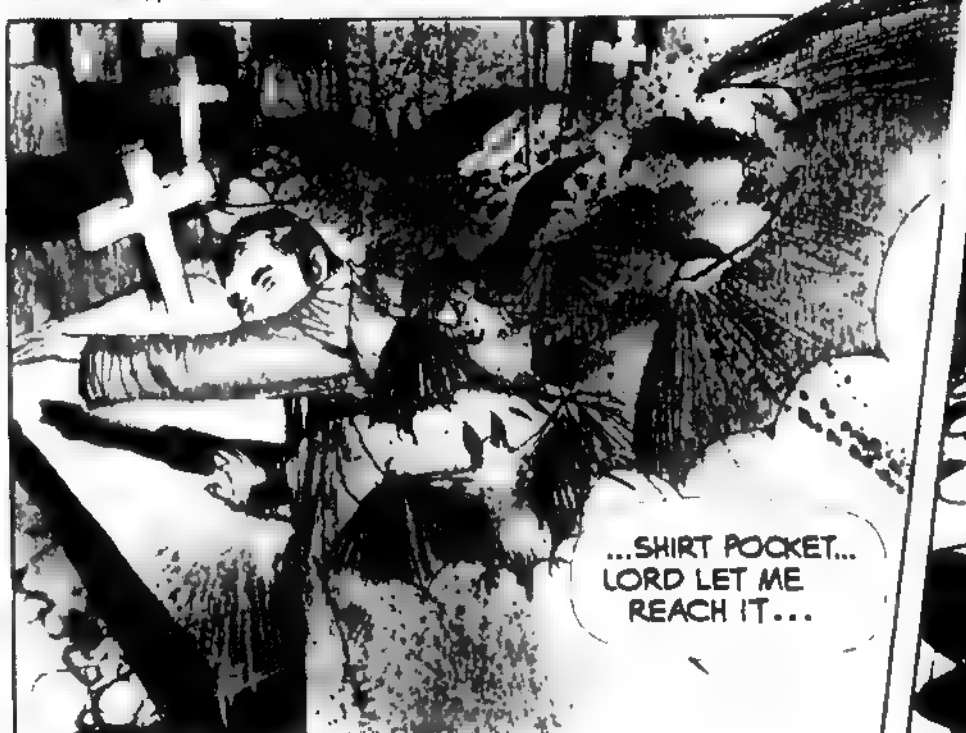


THE HORDE CONVERGES
QUICKLY TO BITE, SLASH...
ATTACK!



HE RIPS THE POCKET OPEN. THE LIGHTER FLARES
INTO LIFE AND TRASK THRUSTS IT AT THE NEAREST
VAMPIRE.

HE GOES DOWN, HUDDLES AGAINST A TOMBSTONE.
FANGS VICIOUSLY BITE AND TEAR AT HIS COAT. CLAWS
RAKE ACROSS HAIR AND UNPROTECTED SKIN,
RAINING LACERATIONS AND BLOOD.



...SHIRT POCKET...
LORD LET ME
REACH IT...



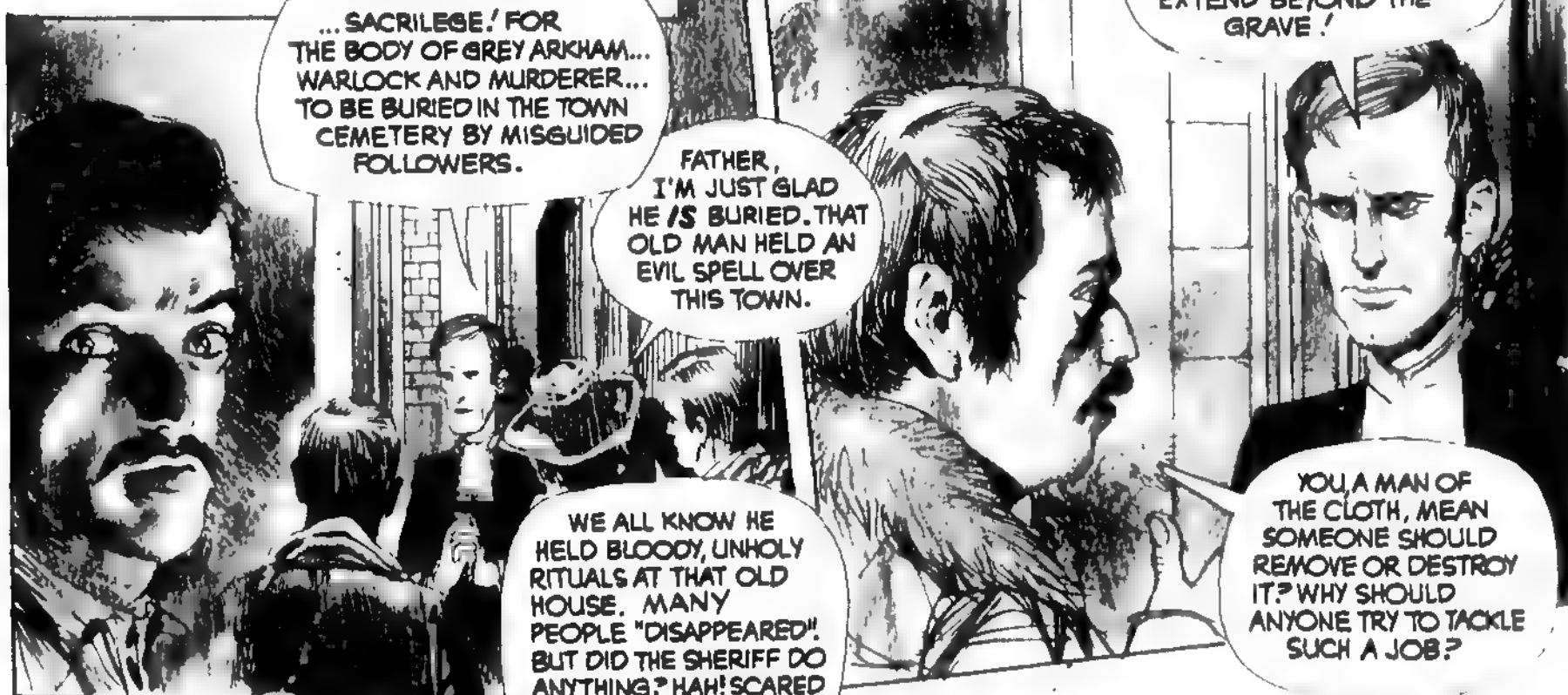
HE WRAPS COAT-TATTERS ROUND A BRANCH AND IGNITES IT. THE DEMONS BURN, AND SCREAM, AND FLY AWAY.



DAMN YOU!
DAMN YOU! GET
AWAY FROM
ME!

THE GHASTLY SCENE BRINGS HIM NEAR MADNESS.
TO COUNTER IT, HIS MIND DRIFTS BACK. A DAY AGO...

AS LONG AS ARKHAM'S
BODY REMAINS IN THE
CEMETERY **UNDISTURBED**,
OUR BURIAL PLACE IS
ACCURSED! NONE WHO LAY
THERE SHALL KNOW REST.
AND HIS POWER MAY WELL
EXTEND BEYOND THE
GRAVE!



...SACRILEGE! FOR
THE BODY OF GREY ARKHAM...
WARLOCK AND MURDERER...
TO BE BURIED IN THE TOWN
CEMETERY BY MISGUIDED
FOLLOWERS.

FATHER,
I'M JUST GLAD
HE *IS* BURIED. THAT
OLD MAN HELD AN
EVIL SPELL OVER
THIS TOWN.

WE ALL KNOW HE
HELD BLOODY, UNHOLY
RITUALS AT THAT OLD
HOUSE. MANY
PEOPLE "DISAPPEARED".
BUT DID THE SHERIFF DO
ANYTHING? HAH! SCARED
LIKE ALL THE REST.

YOU, A MAN OF
THE CLOTH, MEAN
SOMEONE SHOULD
REMOVE OR DESTROY
IT? WHY SHOULD
ANYONE TRY TO TACKLE
SUCH A JOB?

THEY DO NOT NOTICE THE
WOMAN UNTIL SHE IS AMONG
THEM, SPEAKING IN A VOICE
HARSH AS THE BITING AUTUMN
WIND.



YOU KNOW
WHY, DON'T
YOU, JOSEPH
TRASK?

YOU KNOW
WHY.

HE STUMBLES IN DEATH-DARKNESS, TRYING TO RECALL THE DIRECTION OF HIS GOAL. STOPPING TO WIPE BLOOD FROM HIS EYES, HE SPIES IT AT LAST.

I KNOW WHY...
WHY. GOOD LORD...
THERE IT...



...SORCERER...
RITUALIST... SACRIFICIAL
MURDERER... DYING
FROM SOMETHING AS
MORTAL AS A HEART
ATTACK.

GOD GIVE
ME THE STRENGTH
TO DIG HIM UP.

FIERCELY, WITHOUT CEASING, HE **DIGS!**
HOURS FLOOD BY, UNTIL HE STOPS
TEN FEET DEEP!

WHY BURIED
SO DEEP, ARKHAM?
WANT TO BE CLOSER
TO HELL? GOT TO
OPEN THE COFFIN
NOW...



NO. NOT
WHEN I'M THIS
CLOSE.



ANOTHER JOINS THE FIRST. LOW THROATED
SNARLING ACCOMPANIES THEIR LEAP.



NO! NOOOO!!



HE EMPTIES THE REVOLVER, USING THE SHOVEL AS A SHIELD FOR FACE AND THROAT, FOR WHICH THE PACK REPEATEDLY SPRINGS.

THE DIGGING INSTRUMENT BECOMES A SCYTHE, A PENDULUM OF HURTLING BLOODY DEATH. SECTIONS OF GRAVE-WALL CRUMBLE UNDER THE FEROCIOUS ONSLAUGHT.



THE FOUL RODENTS ARE *EVERYWHERE*. TRASK PLUNGES THE TOOL DOWNWARDS... *SMASHES* THROUGH THE COFFIN LID OF BLACK LOCUST WOOD.

...AND THE RATS FLEE!



THE CORPSE LEERS UP AT HIM. ONLY A FEW DAYS BURIED, ITS OWN GODLESS EVIL HAS REDUCED IT TO A DECAYED, SICKENING HEAP, OOZING MAGGOTS AND WORMS AND STENCH.



HE IS REVULSED, CLOSE TO VOMITING, BLEEDING HEAVILY, STUNNED FROM SHOCK. YET HE STRUGGLES. PULLS THE VILE CADAVER FROM OUT THE GRAVE.

WON'T BE...
BEATEN NOW...
WON'T.

THE POWER OF THE BEYOND. THE DAMNED. IT WORKS AGAIN NOW, MALIGNANTLY, UNSEEN...



ARKHAM UPRIGHTS HIMSELF ON BONY PUTRESCENT LEGS... MOVES TOWARD HIS PAIN-AGONISED VICTIM. INSANE SKELETAL LAUGHTER RISES FROM NOWHERE.

GAAA!



BLOOD FROM HIS CHEST SOAKS HIS SHIRT, RUNS DOWN HIS CLOTHES... HE IS HALF-DEAD. BUT HE RISES AND STRIKES! WEAKENED, ROTTEN BONE AND CARTILAGE PARTS UNDER HIS VIOLENT, DESPERATE BLOWS...

WON'T BE BEATEN...
FIGHT YOU... TILL
I DIE!

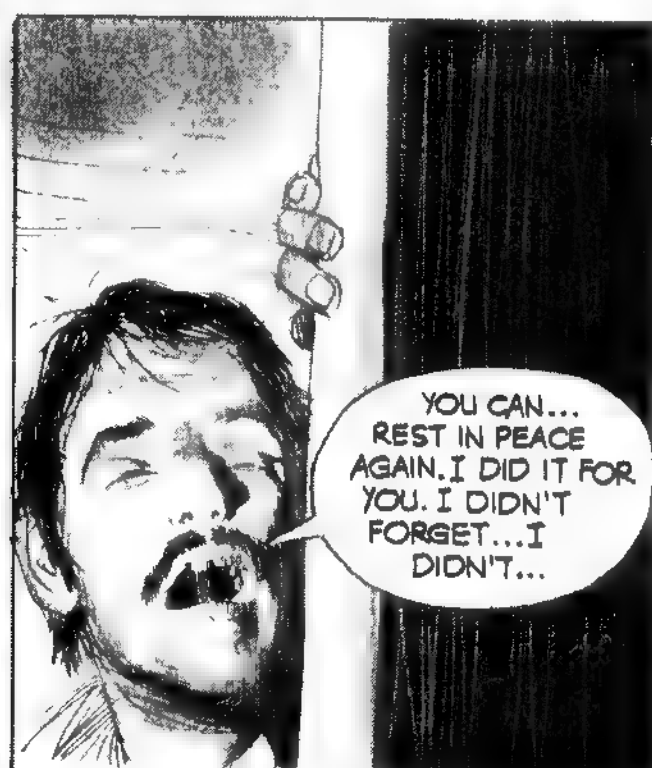
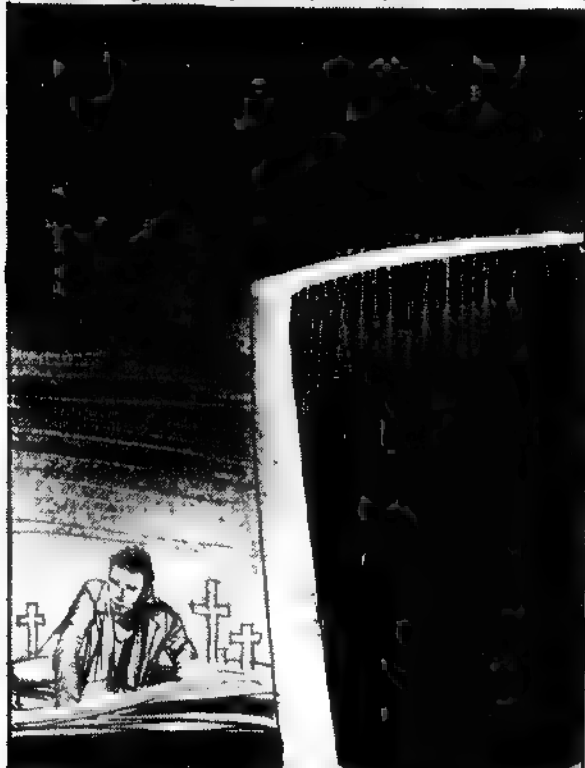


...UNTIL THE CORE OF EVIL, ARKHAM'S UNDYING BRAIN, IS MASHED TO PULP!

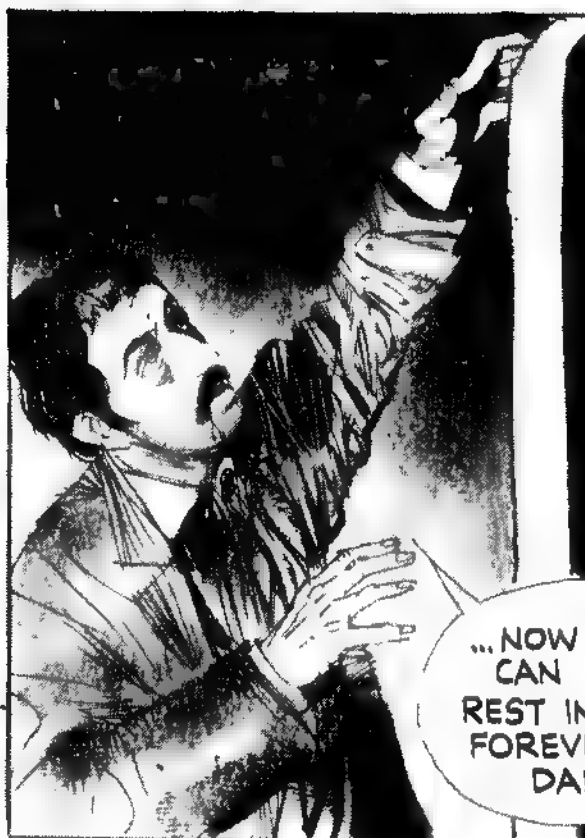


CORPSE IS...
DESTROYED... CURSE
... LIFTED! NOW...
JUST ONE MORE
GOAL ... TO...
REACH.

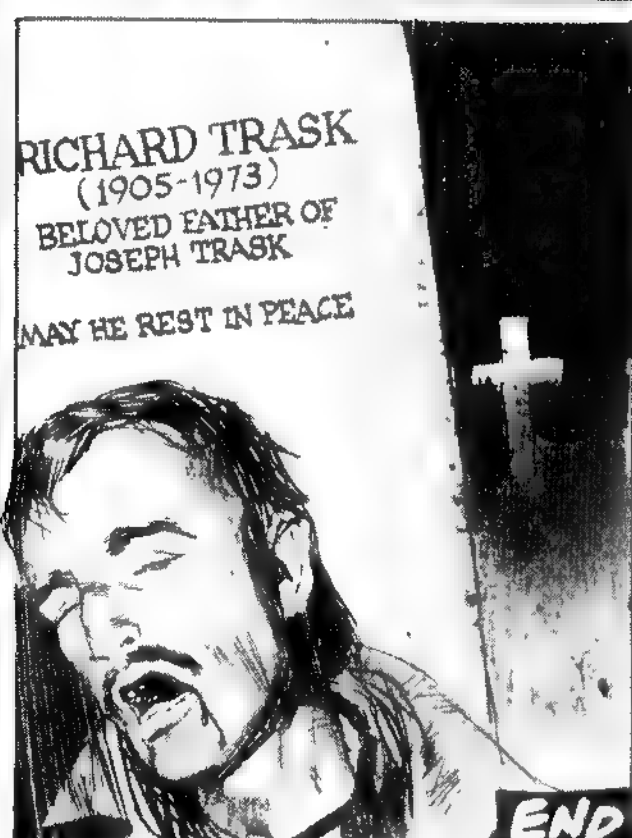
MINUTES ONLY REMAIN TO HIM. DEATH TEARS AND PULLS WITH MERCILESS FINGERS AT HIS WEARY, MUTILATED BODY, BUT FIERCE DETERMINATION MAKES HIM CLAW THE GROUND AND CRAWL. CRAWL. UNTIL HIS GOAL IS ATTAINED.



YOU CAN...
REST IN PEACE
AGAIN. I DID IT FOR
YOU. I DIDN'T
FORGET... I
DIDN'T...



... NOW YOU
CAN REST...
REST IN PEACE
FOREVER ...
DAD!



RICHARD TRASK
(1905-1973)
BELOVED FATHER OF
JOSEPH TRASK
MAY HE REST IN PEACE

END

PROLOGUE: GERMANY 1623. IN THE ABSENCE OF CENTRAL AUTHORITY, THE INDEPENDENT THEOCRACIES OF THE **HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE** TURNED TO THE **CAROLINA CODES**, PRESCRIBING **TORTURE** AND **DEATH** FOR THOSE ACCUSED OF WITCHCRAFT. THE BISHOPRIC OF BAMBERG GREW INFAMOUS AS THE CENTER OF RELIGIOUS INQUISITION IN EUROPE UNDER THE HEXENBISCHOF, GOTTFRIED THE SECOND.

THE GRIM **PROCESSION** MOVED QUIETLY THROUGH THE TOWN SQUARE TOWARD SILENT **GALLOWS** WAITING INDIFFERENTLY FOR THEIR NEXT **SACRIFICE**.

HELGA STARKNEIN SEEMED UNAWARE OF THEIR FATEFUL PROPHECY, AS HER THOUGHTS DRIFTED BACK TO ONE WEEK EARLIER...

FRAU **HELGA** STARKNEIN?

I AM SHE. **WHAT** DO YOU WANT?

IN THE NAME OF HIS **EXCELLENCY**, HEXENBISCHOF OF BAMBERG YOU ARE ACCUSED OF **HERESY** AND **PARTICIPATION** IN THE **BLACK RITES**. YOU WILL COME WITH US!

THE ROPE **BURNED** SLIGHTLY AS IT WAS DRAWN ABOUT HER NECK, BUT **IF** THERE WAS PAIN, HELGA SHOWED NO SIGN, JUST AS SHE SEEMED **OBLIVIOUS** TO THE BLACK-COWLED FIGURE WHO LOOMED TACITLY BEHIND HER.

MOMMY, WHAT ARE THESE MEN DOING TO YOU?

MIRCALLA, MY DARLING, MOMMY HAS TO **GO AWAY** FOR AWHILE, SO DON'T WORRY. YOU'LL TAKE **GOOD** CARE OF YOURSELF... OF **BOTH** OF US... **WON'T** YOU, MY DARLING?

YES,
MOMMY...



I'LL TAKE
CARE... OF
BOTH OF US!

WITH A **SICKENING SNAP**, HELGA'S
MEMORIES, AND HER LIFE, WERE
BROUGHT TO THEIR ABRUPT END.



IT RAINED THE DAY THEY
HANGED HELGA STARKNEIN;
A COLD, BITTER RAIN THAT
DIDN'T SEEM TO BOTHER
MIRCALLA AS SHE WATCHED.
THOSE WHO **KNEW** HER
SAID **SOMETHING HAPPENED**
THAT DAY... SOMETHING
STRANGE, SOMETHING
FRIGHTENING.





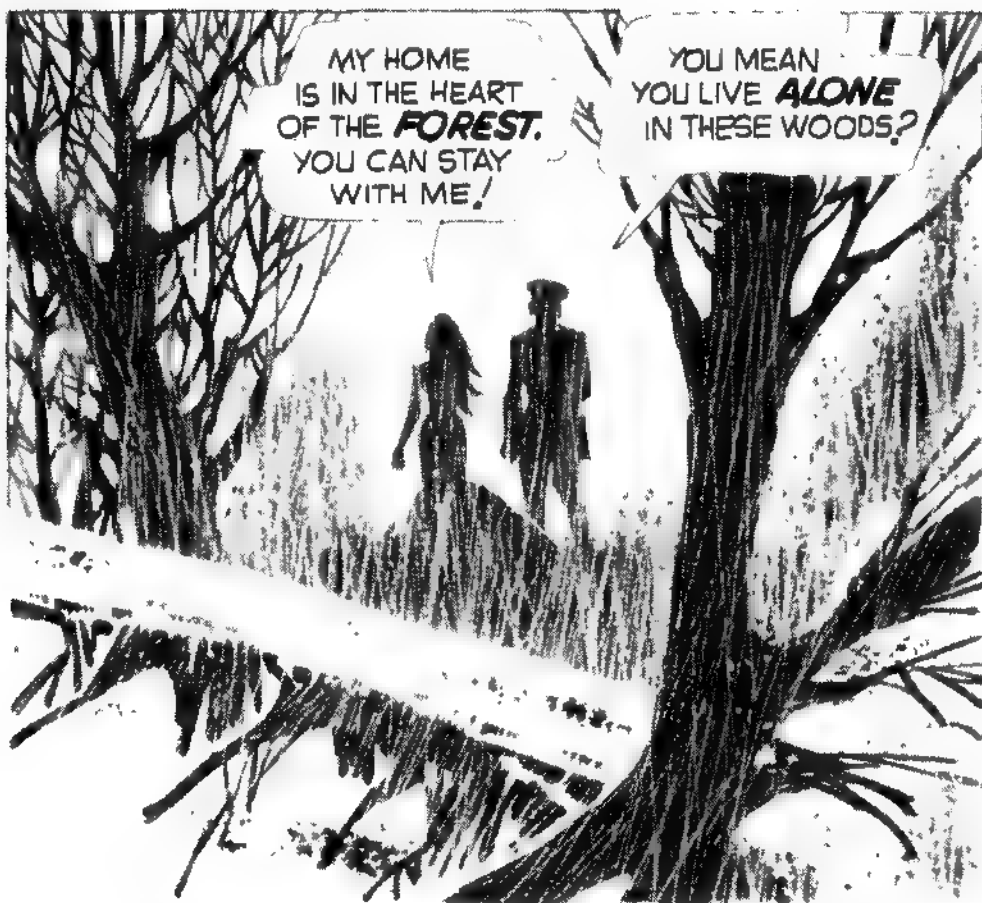
THEY SAY "HELL
HATH NO FURY LIKE
A WOMAN SCORNED,"
ESPECIALLY IF THE
WOMAN IN QUESTION
HAPPENS TO BE A WITCH.
MEET WILHELM BRANDT,
CAPTAIN IN THE GERMAN ARMY,
CONSUMED WITH PASSION FOR
THE BEAUTIFUL MIRCALLA,
BUT FOR BRANDT, PASSION
IS A PASSING THING
SOMETIMES LEAVING
BITTER EMBERS...

THE WITCH'S PROMISE

WELL, LITTLE
SOLDIER, WHAT
ARE YOU DOING OUT
HERE IN THE
WOODS BY
YOURSELF?

I MIGHT WELL
ASK **YOU** THE SAME
QUESTION, MY LOVELY.
BUT SINCE **YOU** ASKED
FIRST, I AM MAKING
MY WAY TO **HEADQUARTERS**
IN WURZBERG... TO **END**
MY ENLISTMENT!

IT'S QUITE **RARE**
THAT **ANYONE** PASSES
THROUGH THESE WOODS.
THAT'S WHY I CHOOSE TO
LIVE HERE. IN ANY CASE,
WURZBERG IS STILL FAR
OFF, AND YOU WILL NEED
FOOD AND SHELTER
FOR THE NIGHT.



MY HOME
IS IN THE HEART
OF THE **FOREST**.
YOU CAN STAY
WITH ME!

YOU MEAN
YOU LIVE **ALONE**
IN THESE WOODS?



NO, WITH **MIDNIGHT**
MY **CAT** AND DEVOTED
FRIEND! **WE** HAVE
BEEN ALONE SINCE
MY MOTHER WAS
HANGED AS A
WITCH, MANY
YEARS AGO!

I DIDN'T
REALIZE SUCH
THINGS HAPPENED
IN **THIS** DAY
AND AGE.



THERE IS
MUCH YOU DON'T
REALIZE, CAPTAIN
BRANDT.



ALL THESE YEARS
WITHOUT
COMPANIONSHIP...
DON'T YOU EVER GET
LONELY? HAVEN'T
YOU EVER **WANTED**
A MAN TO PUT HIS
ARMS AROUND YOU...

FLATTERY COMES CHEAP, DOESN'T IT, WILHELM
BRANDT? YOU'VE GIVEN IT FREELY TO **COUNTLESS**
LOVELY WOMEN... WOMEN YOU HAVE PLAYED WITH
LIKE HELPLESS PUPPETS...

YES, FLATTERY COMES CHEAP; AND ITS COST
COMES ONLY FROM THOSE WHO FOOLISHLY
ACCEPT IT...

THE SUAVE **SMILE**... THE COOL **URBANE MANNER**... THEY
NEVER FAIL, **DO THEY**, WILHELM BRANDT? YOU'VE PLAYED ON
A WOMAN'S **LONELINESS**, AND YOU'VE WON... BE PROUD OF
YOUR CHARMS, WILHELM BRANDT... YOU HAVE **VERY LITTLE**
ELSE YOU CAN BE PROUD OF...



LAST NIGHT WAS SO **SWEET**, MY LOVE. I'VE BEEN **ALONE** SO LONG I'D **FORGOTTEN** WHAT IT MEANT TO SHARE THINGS. STAY HERE **ALWAYS** WITH ME PLEASE?



HERE, IN THIS **DISMAL WILDERNESS?** YOU **MUST** BE **JOKING!** THERE'S A LOT MORE LIKE YOU IN THE **REAL** WORLD... AND I PLAN TO SAMPLE MANY MORE. BEFORE I'VE SETTLED DOWN...



YOU **CAN'T** LEAVE ME NOW. THERE ARE TOO MANY THINGS HAPPENING **INSIDE** ME... **NEW** THINGS, WONDERFUL THINGS THAT I HAVE **NEVER** FELT BEFORE!



SOMEDAY I'LL LEARN TO BE MORE **SELECTIVE** ABOUT MY WOMEN. THIS ONE'S AS MAD AS THEY COME. SUCH **UNPLEASANTNESS** IS **TOTALLY** UNNECESSARY.

GET YOUR HANDS **OFF** ME, MIRCALLA. WE'VE **HAD** OUR **FUN...** AND THAT'S OVER AND DONE WITH.



YOU'LL BE **MINE**, MY LOVE... I **SWEAR** IT! **BEWARE**, WILHELM BRANDT... **BEWARE WALPURGIS NIGHT!** ON **THAT** NIGHT, WE WILL BE **REUNITED** ONCE AGAIN FOR **ETERNITY!**



THE WEEKS IDLED BY,
AND BRANDT WAS
ONCE AGAIN A
CIVILIAN. MIRCALLA'S
THREATS WERE WASHED
AWAY BY THE **SWEET**
TASTE OF **ALE** AND THE
WARM FLESH OF A
LOCAL STREET WENCH
NAMED **NINA**...



**DRINK UP, LOVELY
NINA. YOU'LL SEE NO
FINER SPIRITS, NOT
EVEN ON WALPURGIS
NIGHT!**

WHEN I WAS A
CHILD I WAS
FRIGHTENED BY THE
STORIES OF **WITCHES'**
SABBATHS AND THE
RITES OF THE **DEAD!**



AND NO MORE
HANDSOME MAN
TO ENJOY THEM WITH.
THEY CHILL ME STILL! BUT
I WISH YOU WOULDN'T
LAUGH AT THE STORIES
OF **WALPURGIS NIGHT.**

YOU ACTUALLY
BELIEVE THOSE
OLD **WIVES' TALES**
...WITCHES AND
VAMPIRES?

NONSENSE! **COME**
WITH ME. WE'LL GO TO
MY FATHER'S **ESTATE**
IN **WILDBAD**. THE DEAR
OLD MAN IS **AWAY** ON
BUSINESS, WE WILL
HAVE THE PLACE FOR
OURSELVES!

I **NEVER**
SAID THAT, BUT
ON **WALPURGIS**
NIGHT THERE
IS **EVIL** IN
THE AIR.

WILDBAD?
THAT MEANS
WE'LL HAVE TO
CROSS THE
BLACK FOREST?

YOU HAVE CHOSEN
THE PATH OF **REASON**.
MY DEAR, **SUPERSTITION**
IS LIKE **RELIGION**. IT'S
FINE AS LONG AS WE DON'T
LET IT INTERFERE WITH
OUR **PLEASURES**.
REMEMBER THAT, NINA.

I'VE HAD
ENOUGH OF THIS.
IF YOU WON'T
ACCOMPANY ME,
I'LL FIND **SOMEONE**
WHO WILL.



THE COACH **TREMLED** VIOLENTLY OVER THE COLD-HARDENED EARTH, THE MONOTONOUS **RUMBLE** DULLING BRANDT'S SENSES LEAVING HIM TOTALLY **UNPREPARED** FOR THE **HISSING HORROR** THAT WAITED ALONG THE SERPENTINE TRAIL.



HOURS PASSED BEFORE BRANDT **STRUGGLED** TO HIS SENSES, THE BLOOD ON HIS TEMPLE HAD SINCE COAGULATED, STAINING THE **CRUSTED TISSUE** A DEEP CRIMSON.



NINA AND THE **DRIVER... BOTH DEAD!** AND THE CARRIAGE COMPLETELY **DESTROYED**. NOTHING IN SIGHT BUT THIS **DAMNED WILDERNESS...**



BRANDT **WALKED** ON, HIS FACE PALER THAN THE LUCID MOON WHICH THREW ITS GHASTLY **SHADOWS** ACROSS BRANDT'S WEARY FEATURES...



AND STILL HE WALKED, **GRATEFUL** FOR EACH NEW **BREATH** HIS SPENT LUNGS WOULD ADMIT. FOR EVERY PORTION OF HIS FRAME **SCREAMED IN PAIN** AND EXHAUSTION.



NOTHING...
THERE SEEMS
TO BE **NO**
WAY OUT...

STRANGE,
THERE'S SOMETHING
FAMILIAR
ABOUT THIS
AREA. **I**



RECOGNITION COMES **SLOWLY**, BUT IT COMES NONETHELESS. IN THOSE LAST FATEFUL SECONDS, WILHELM BRANDT, YOU REMEMBER A **PROMISE** ONCE MADE BY A BEAUTIFUL, PERHAPS MAD, YOUNG WOMAN...



...AND YOU SCREAM.!



MIRCALLA...
OH, MY **GOD...**
NO!



LOOKS LIKE MIRCALLA HAD QUITE A **CRUSH** ON CAPTAIN BRANDT AFTER ALL. AFTER SHE HAD GONE SO FAR OUT ON A **LIMB** FOR HIM, THE LEAST HE COULD HAVE DONE WAS SEND HER AN **ARBOR DAY CARD**.

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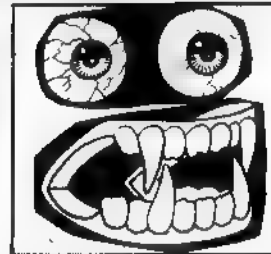
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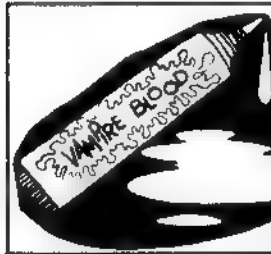
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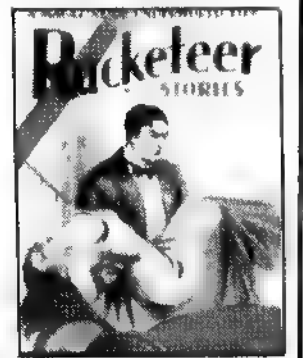
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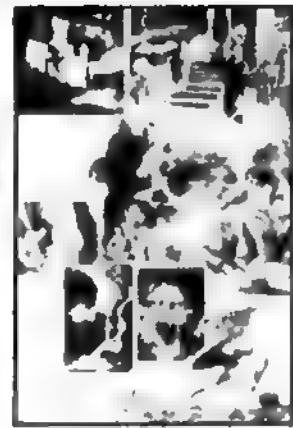
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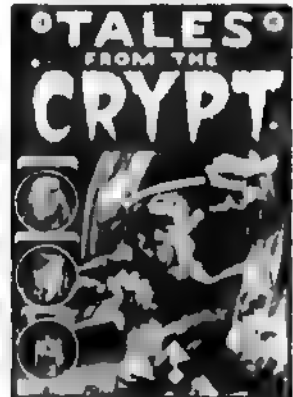
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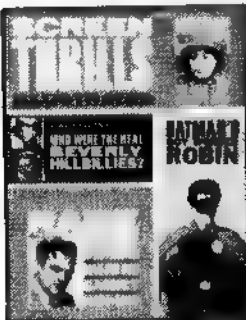
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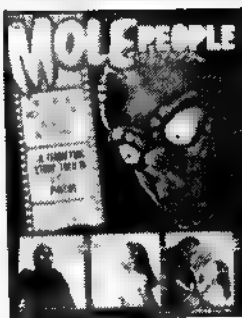
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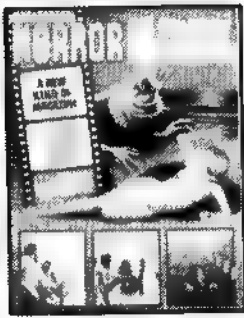
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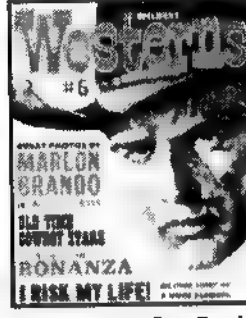
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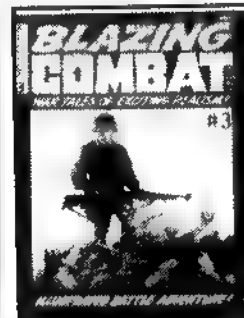
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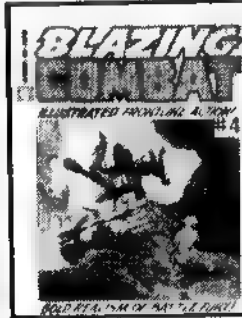
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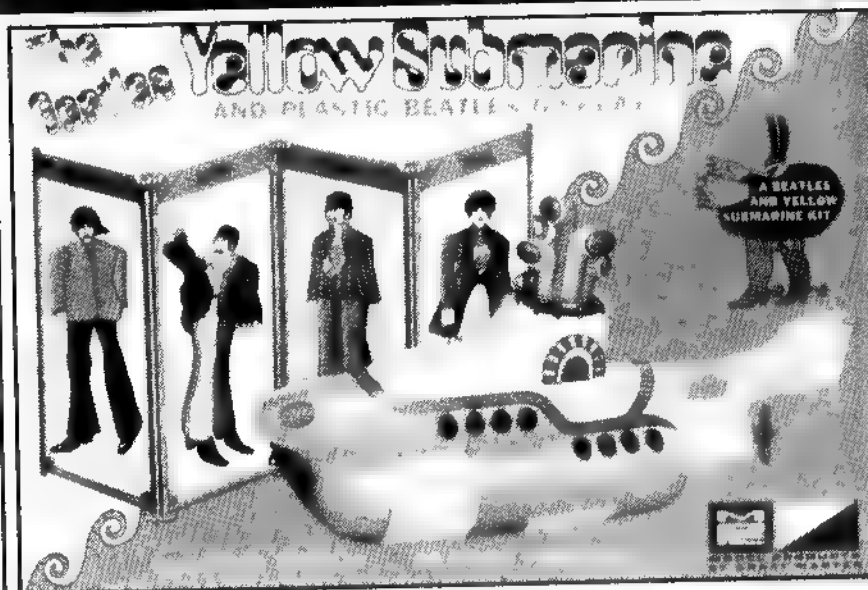
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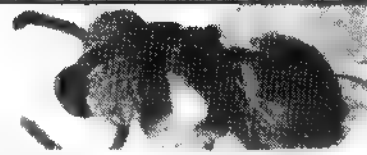
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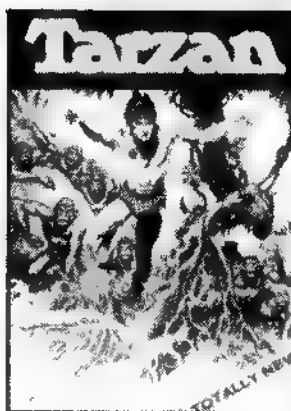
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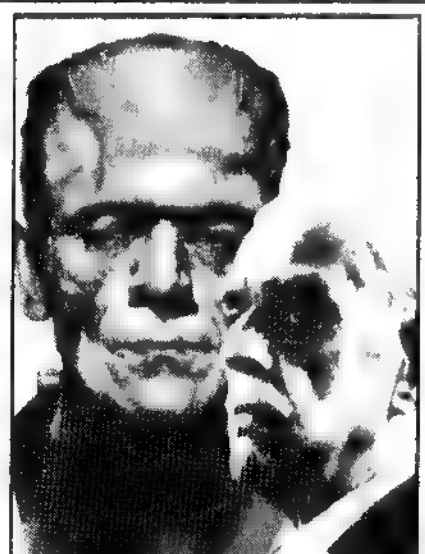
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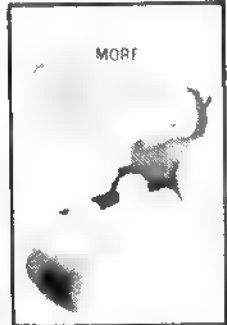
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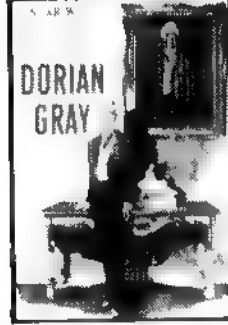
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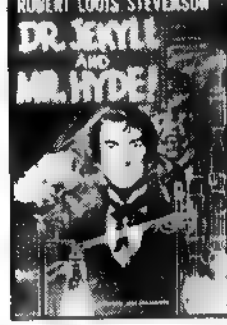
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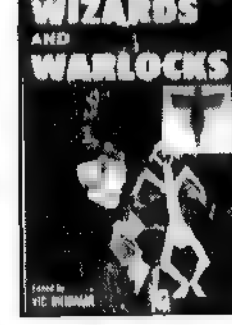
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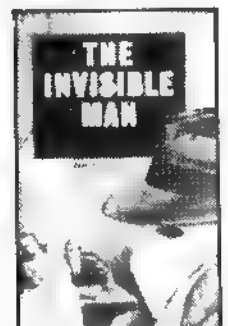
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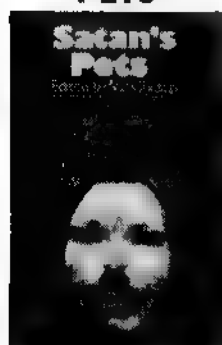
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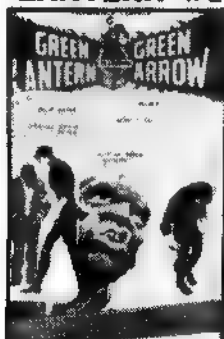
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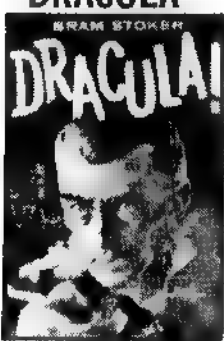
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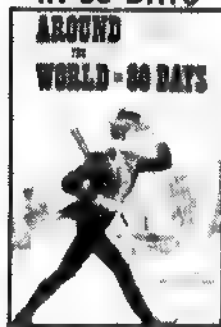
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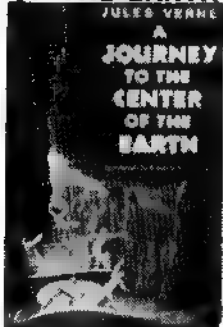
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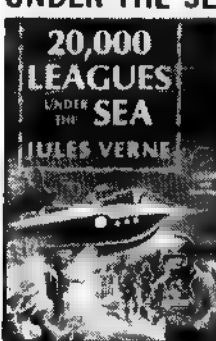
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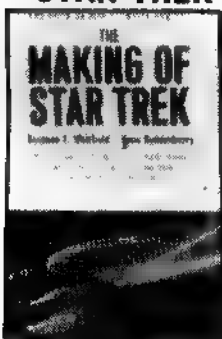
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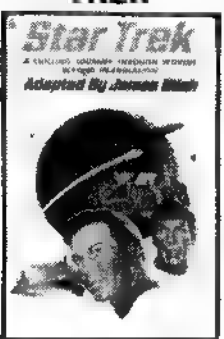
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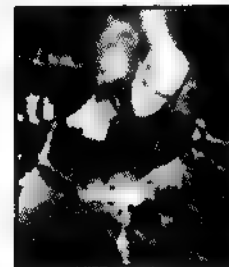
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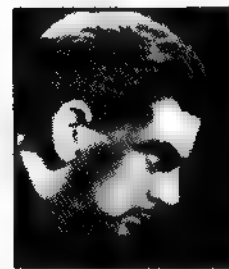
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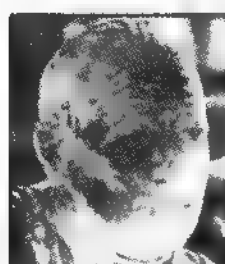
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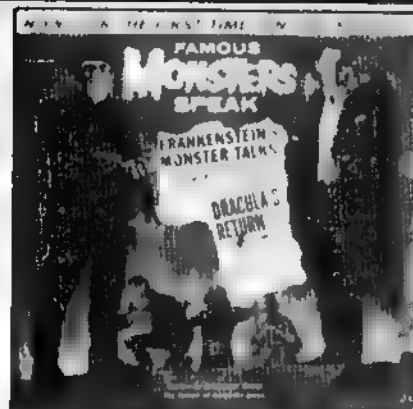


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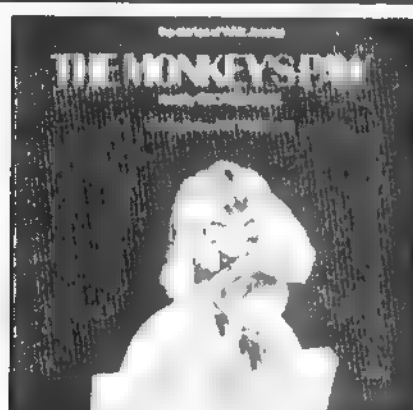
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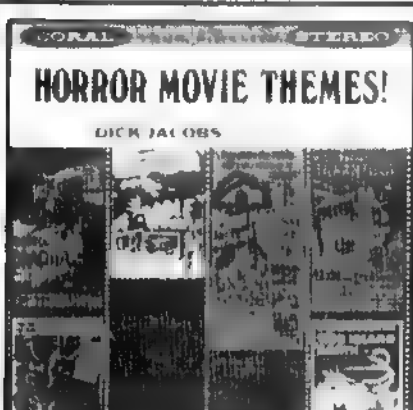
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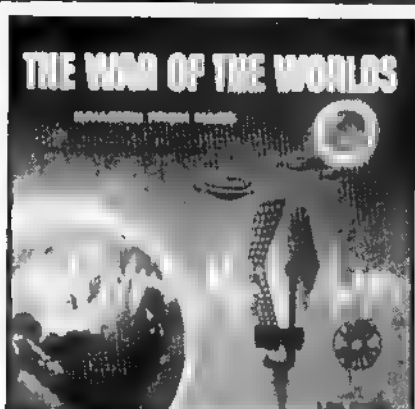
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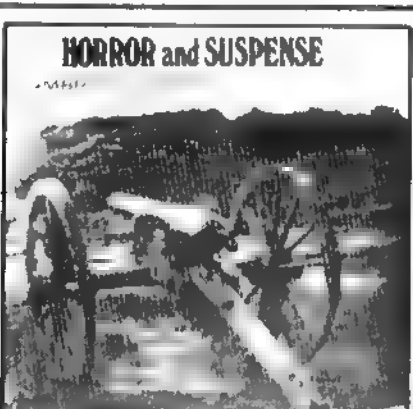
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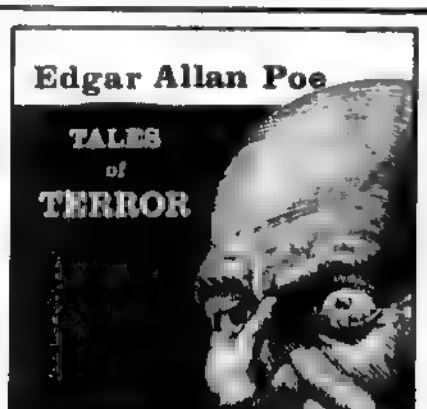
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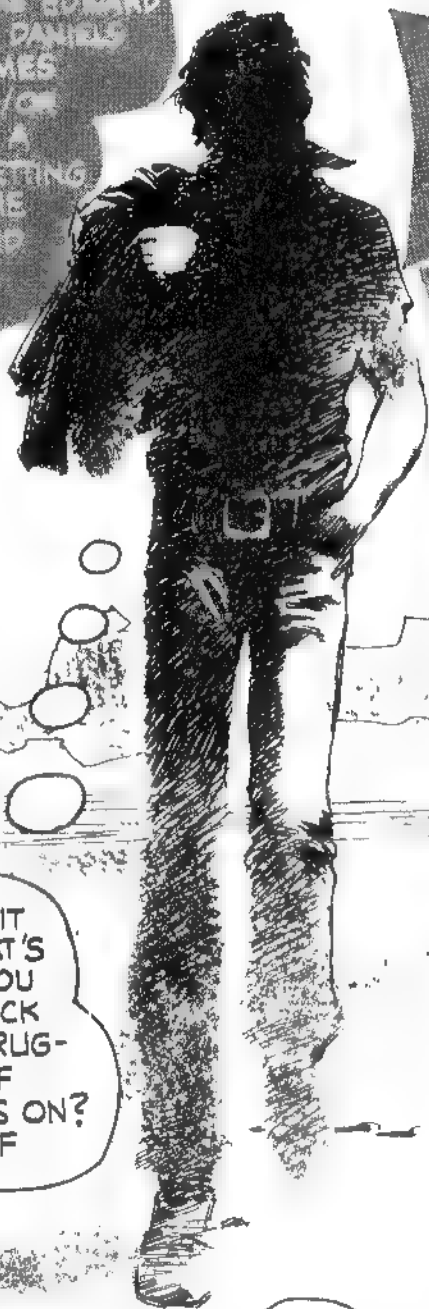
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SAY HELLO TO EDDIE KELCH-ALIAS EDWARD RANDAL DANIEL EDWARDS DAVID DANIELS AND TWO OR THREE OTHER NAMES DEPENDING ON THE TOWN AND/OR CIRCUMSTANCES. EDDIE'S GOT A PROBLEM: SEEMS HE KEEPS GETTING INTO DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE LAW. A FEW BAD CHECKS AND EDDIE'S ON THE RUN AGAIN.

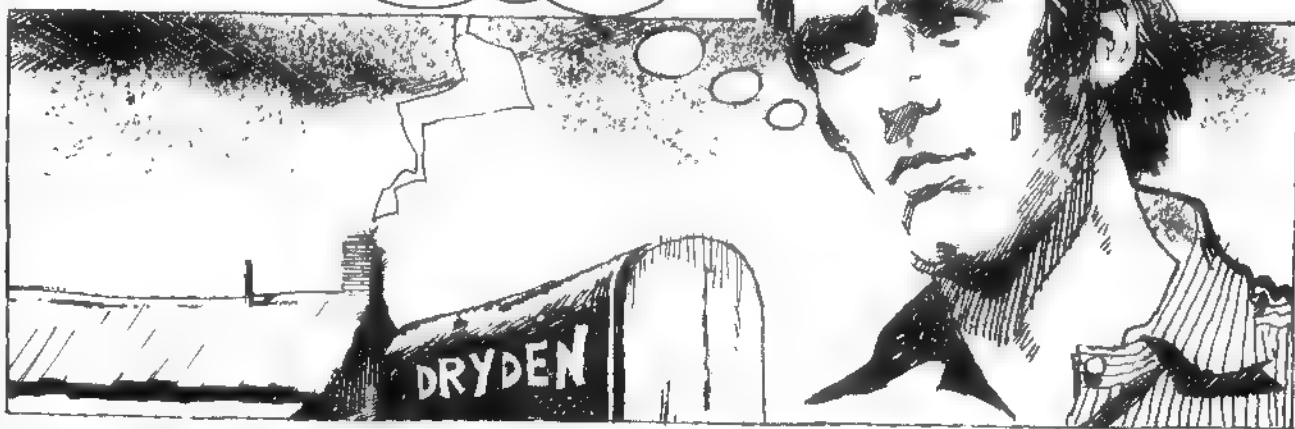
I WON'T EDDIE EVER LEARN



WELL... YOU **REALLY** DONE IT **THIS** TIME, DIDN'T YOU? THAT'S **FIVE** STATES LOOKIN' FOR YOU NOW. WHY'D YOU HAVE TO PICK **THAT** GUY OUT OF ALL THE DRUGGISTS IN TOWN TO PASS OFF THOSE TRAVELERS CHEQUES ON? A HAND WRITING EXPERT OF ALL THINGS...

FORGET IT. WHAT'S DONE IS DONE. ALL YOU CAN DO NOW IS HEAD SOUTH--TOWARDS OKLAHOMA. BUT NOT ON \$7 YOU AIN'T...

DRYDEN... NOT YOUR TYPICAL JAYHAWKER NAME. HMM GIVES ME AN IDEA...



YEAH... WHY NOT?



A FARM MEANS FARMERS
... AND ALL FARMERS NEED
TRUCKS TO GET AROUND IN.
SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD TO
STEAL ONE HERE

MIGHT EVEN BE
ABLE TO SELL IT LATER,
THAT IS, CONSIDERING
THERE'S ANYONE
AROUND...



OUT
HERE!

OHO!
WHAT
HAVE WE
HERE?



HI.

WELL HELLO!

I HEARD YOU
WALKING
AROUND. I'M
AFRAID DAD
ISN'T HOME.



MMM...THAT'S TOO BAD. I-UH-WAS
TOLD BACK IN TOWN THAT HE
MIGHT HAVE A JOB OPENING
OUT HERE.

FUNNY... I DON'T
RECALL DAD
MENTIONING
HE WAS HIRING
ON AN EXTRA
HAND.

NAME'S DAVID
ANDERSON.

BLIND
AS A
BAT...

YES,
I AM.

BEG PARDON?



BLIND. YOUR SUDDEN
SILENCE MEANT YOU WERE
STARING AT ME - OR WAVING
YOUR HAND IN FRONT OF
MY FACE.









CAN I HELP IN SOME WAY?

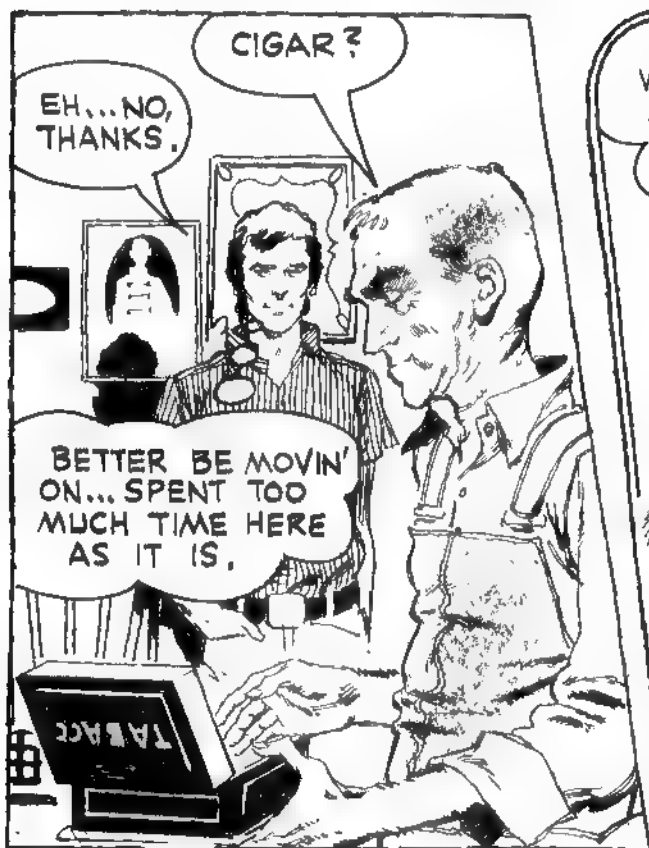
NO...NO, THAT'S WOMAN'S WORK. YOU'LL JUST GET IN HER WAY. C'MON WITH ME.



SO...WHERE ABOUTS YOU OFF TO?

ANYWHERE, OLD MAN-WHEREVER THAT BEATER OF YOURS WILL TAKE ME.

NOT SURE... BACK TO TOWN, I GUESS.



CIGAR?

EH...NO, THANKS.

BETTER BE MOVIN' ON... SPENT TOO MUCH TIME HERE AS IT IS.

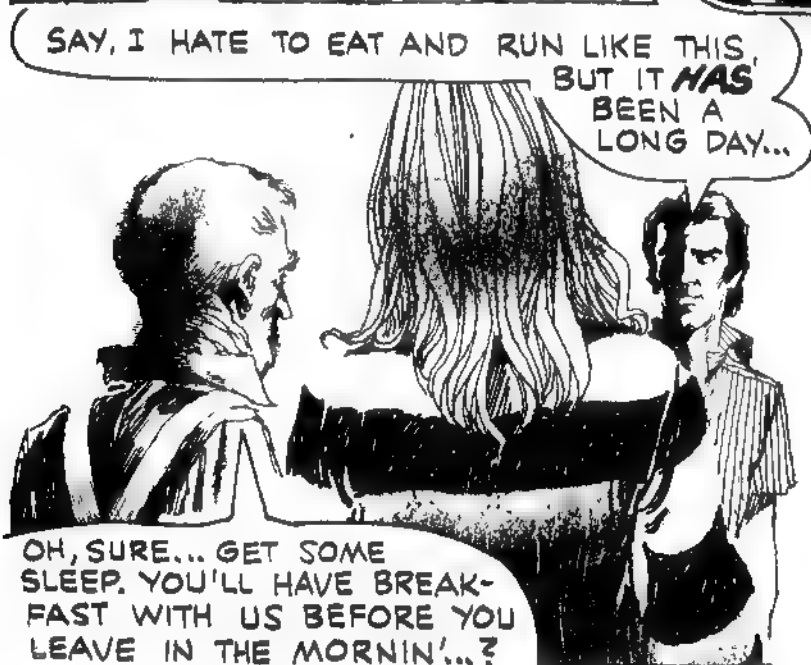


CREEPIES! WOULDJA LOOK AT ALL THAT MONEY...



WELL, LOOK-IT'S A LONG WAYS BACK TO TOWN... WHY DON'T YOU STAY HERE FOR TONIGHT? YOU CAN SET YOURSELF UP IN THE BARN.

WHY, THE OLD FOOL... MUST BE 2 OR 300 DOLLARS IN THAT BOX...



SAY, I HATE TO EAT AND RUN LIKE THIS, BUT IT **HAS** BEEN A LONG DAY...

OH, SURE... GET SOME SLEEP. YOU'LL HAVE BREAKFAST WITH US BEFORE YOU LEAVE IN THE MORNIN'...?

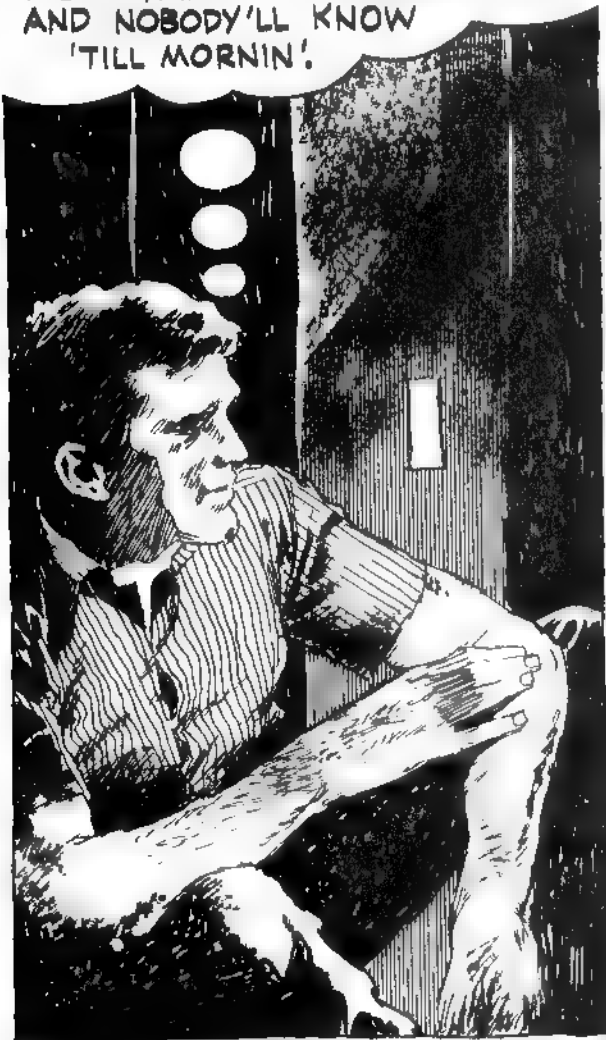


G'NIGHT NOW.

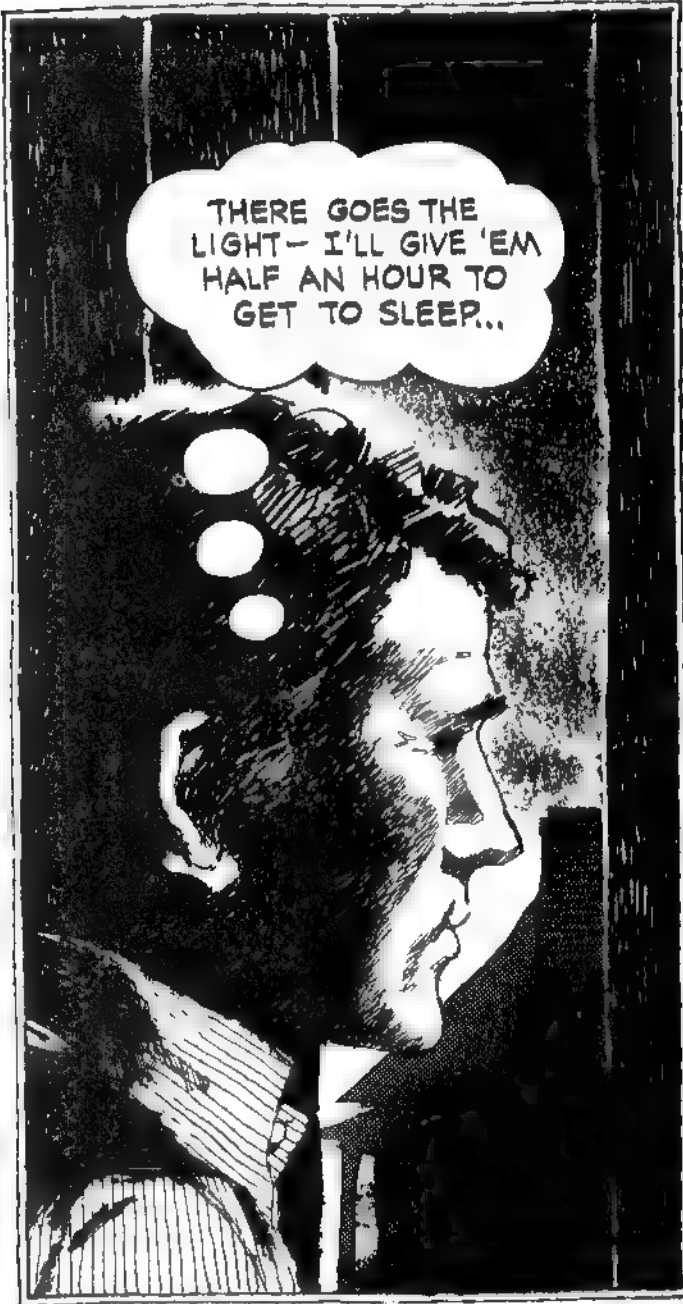
SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.

NOT IF I CAN HELP IT...

LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE GONNA MAKE IT YET, EDDIE, MY BOY. AND HERE YOU WERE SATISFIED WITH JUST PUNCHING UP THE OLD GUY AND SWIPING HIS TRUCK. THIS WAY YOU GET A MEAL, SOME MONEY, **AND** TRANSPORTATION- AND NOBODY'LL KNOW 'TILL MORNIN'.



THERE GOES THE LIGHT- I'LL GIVE 'EM HALF AN HOUR TO GET TO SLEEP...



TIME ENOUGH...



LOCKED...

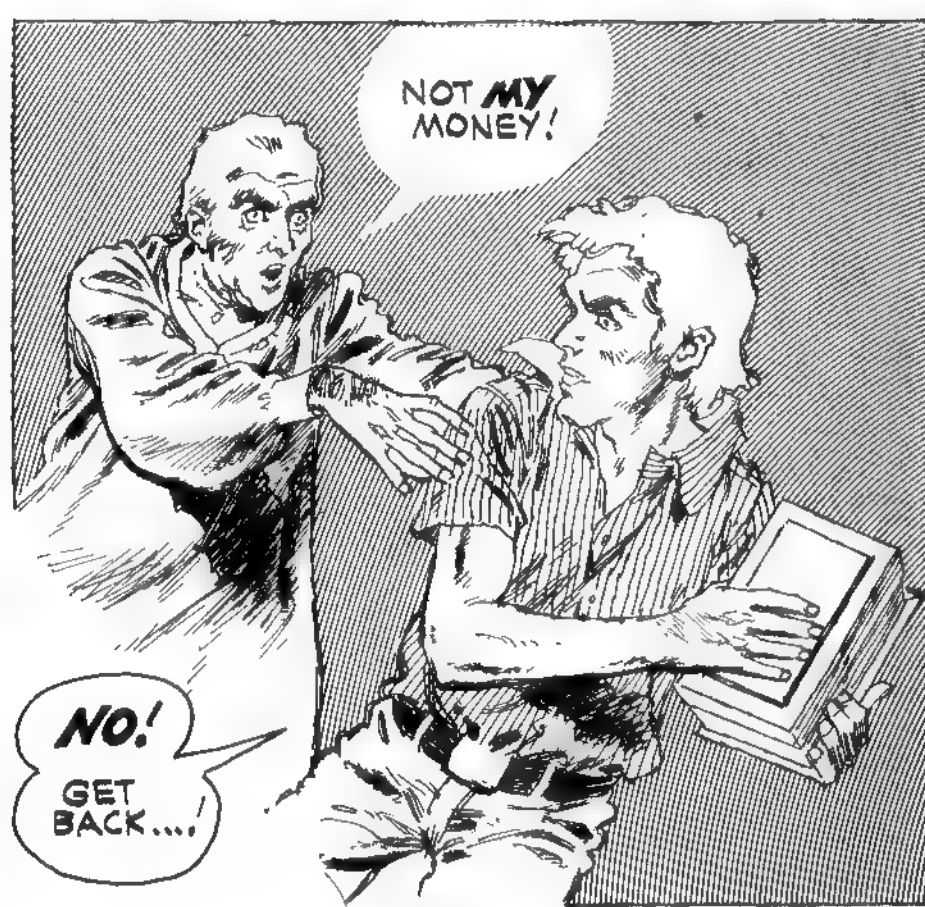
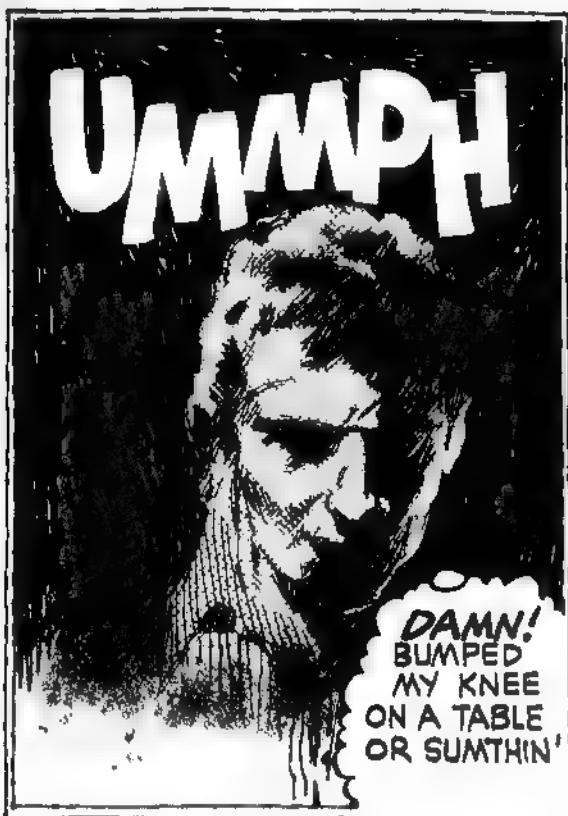


THAT WINDOW GOES RIGHT INTO THE KITCHEN...



QUIET NOW...







DEAD. THE STUPID
FARMER - SERVES HIM
RIGHT... JUMPIN' ME
LIKE THAT.



DAD?
IS THAT
YOU?

MORE
PROBLEMS...

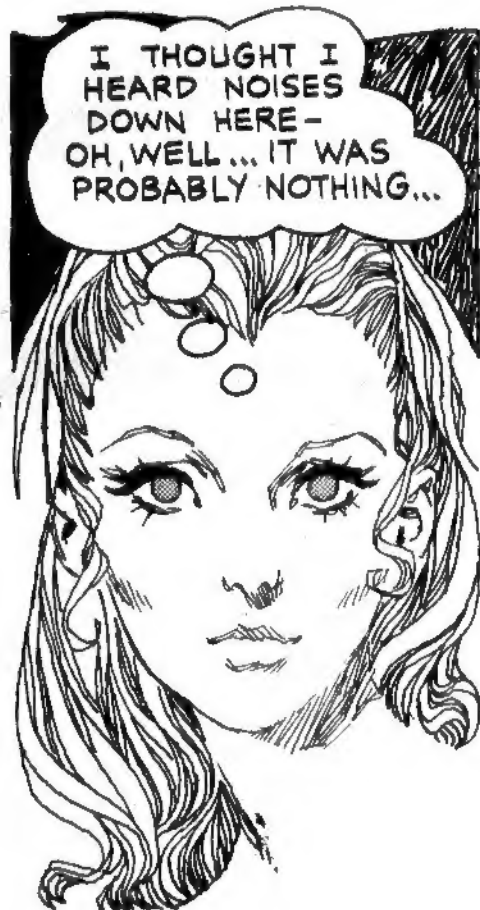


DAD?

C'MON...
CAN'T LEAVE
YOU HERE.



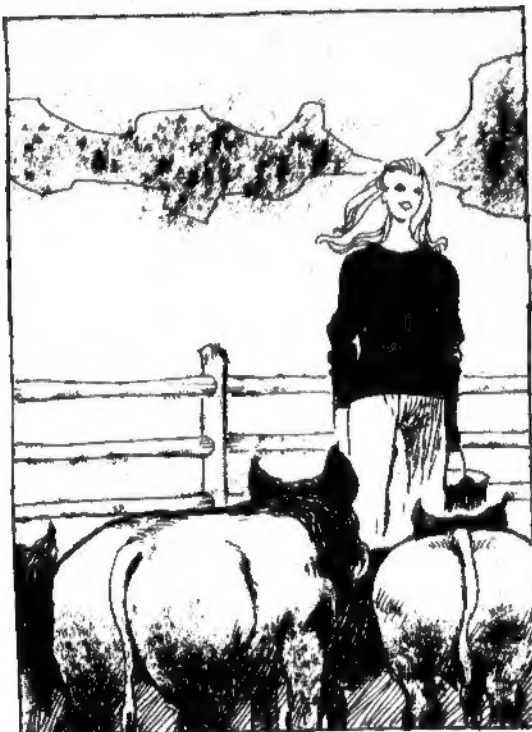
...BUT TRIPS...
EDDIE SILENTLY SLIPS THROUGH THE WINDOW...



...**H**ITTING HIS HEAD ON THE HARD WOODEN *PIG* TROUGH...!



MMM... IT'S WARM.
SUN IS SHINING.
SHOULD TURN
OUT TO BE A
BEAUTIFUL DAY.
I'LL JUST
FINISH THIS AND
WAKE DAD AND
MR. ANDERSON
UP FOR BREAK-
FAST...



YES, YES...
I'M COMING. NOW
DON'T PUSH, I'VE
GOT YOUR FOOD
RIGHT HERE!



HERE
YOU GO.
BREAKFAST
TIME.



OH, HEAVENS!
I HOPE
MR. ANDERSON
LIKES FLAPJACKS.



NOW, NOW...
DON'T BE PIGGY.
THERE'S PLENTY
HERE FOR ALL
OF YOU...



BETTER SKIP
THE FLAPJACKS,
MARY! LOOKS
LIKE WE'RE
GONNA HAVE
HASH!





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VAMPIRELLA PREVIEW OF NEXT ISSUE!

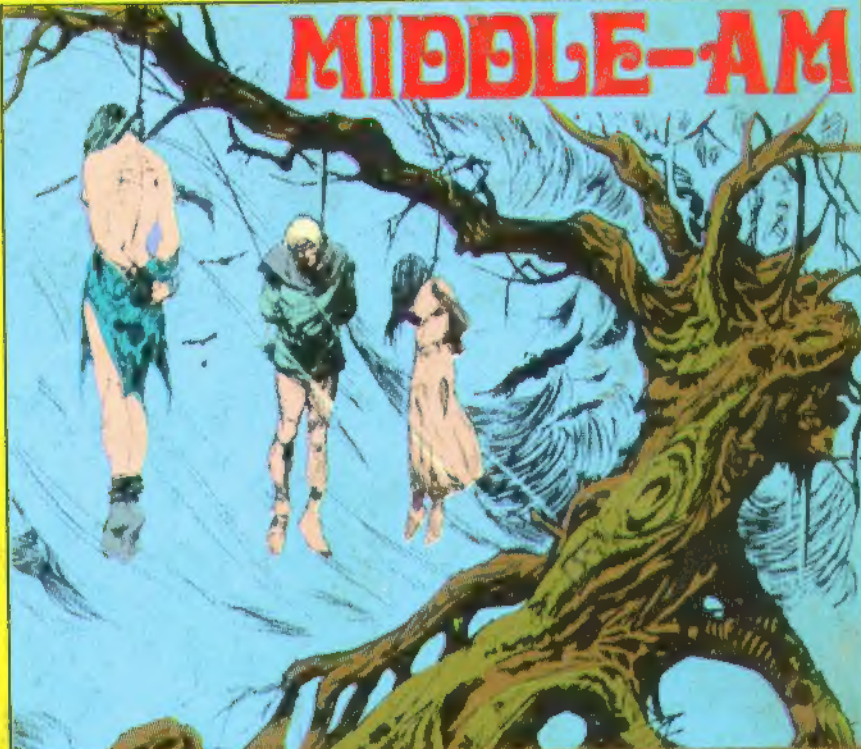
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ON SALE MARCH 13

PREVIEW NEXT ISSUE **EERIE** NO. 47



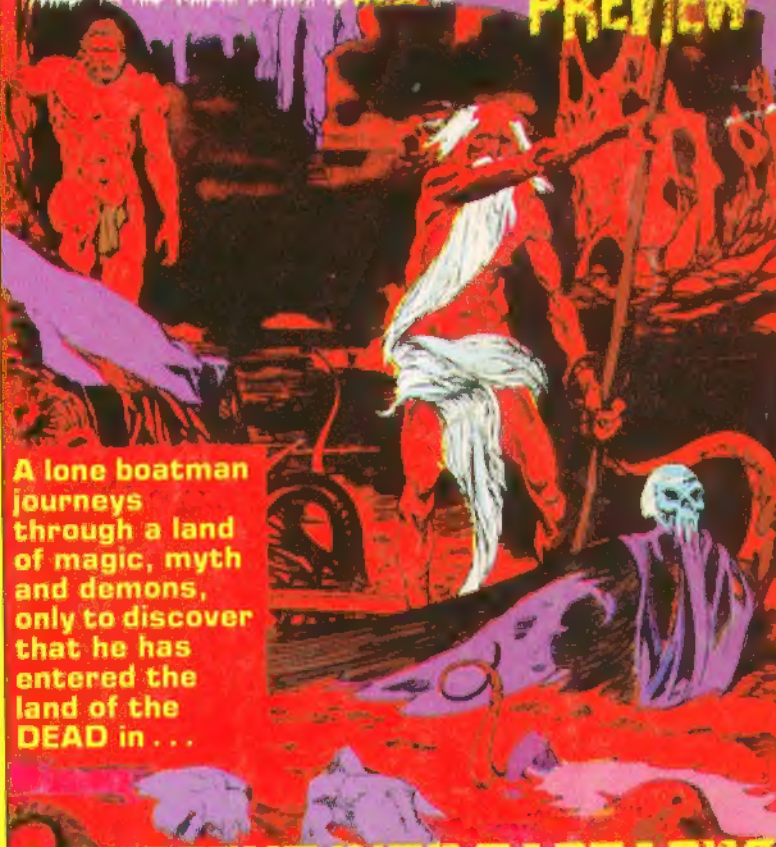
His blade, shimmering in the moonless night, DAX, mighty warrior, waits, bracing himself for the clash with a titanic beast! Only one of the many dangers DAX must face on the distant planet.

GEMMA 5

PLUS: DRACULA, and a one-eyed witch aboard a sailing vessel on the high seas encounter a corpse risen from the grave. "Enter The Dead-Thing!"

ON SALE FEBRUARY 15

CREEPY NO. 33 NEXT ISSUE PREVIEW



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A DESCENT INTO TARTARUS!

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